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U. S. AIR FORCE

PROJECT RAND

RESEARCH MEMORANDUM

CASE STUDIES OF ACTUAL AND
ALLEGED OVERFLIGHTS, 1930-1953 (S)

A. L. George

RM-1349

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FOREWORD

This Research Memorandum is one of a series of four that report the results of an investigation of Soviet reactions to near and actual overflights in peacetime. Each of the four deals with a particular aspect of the problem.

RM-1346, Soviet Reactions to Border Flights and Overflights in Peacetime (TOP SECRET), examines the purposes behind Soviet military, diplomatic, and propaganda response to alleged and actual violations of its borders in different historical periods and in different strategic contexts.

RM-1347, Diplomatic Aspects of Soviet Air-Defense Policy, 1950-1953 (SECRET), discusses some of the difficulties faced by Western diplomacy in attempting to oppose effectively the severe Soviet air-defense policy of the years 1950-1953. The study examines in detail the ingenious diplomatic formula which the Soviets used to describe and justify their action against planes that threatened to intrude upon their air space.

RM-1348, Intelligence Value of Soviet Notes on Air Incidents, 1950-1953 (CONFIDENTIAL), applies the technique of content analysis to Soviet diplomatic notes in an attempt to infer the Soviet intentions behind each air incident and the degree of concern felt by Soviet policy makers over the possible political consequences of their action in each case.

RM-1349, Case Studies of Actual and Alleged Overflights, 1930-1953 (SECRET) and its Supplement (TOP SECRET), contain the basic data on which the three preceding RM's are based. All known cases of real or alleged overflight of another country's air space during the period 1930-1953 have been studied, including Soviet and Satellite overflights of non-communist countries. The case studies contain considerably more information about major air incidents than appears in any of the first three Research Memorandums.

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INTRODUCTION

The present Research Memorandum and its TOP SECRET supplement report case studies of a large number of actual or alleged overflights which have occurred during the period 1930 to 1953.[2] An effort has been made to collect detailed information about as many cases as possible of peacetime overflight, especially about those that occurred between the end of World War II and December, 1953. Systematic research on this kind of problem involves many difficulties, however, and the present compendium is incomplete in several respects. Not every case of overflight has been covered, the information obtained on many cases is sketchy, and, even when it is reasonably complete, there often remain important unanswered -- perhaps unanswerable -- questions.

Many classified and unclassified sources have been used, as indicated in the text. Within USAF, the major source was the classified operational files of the Reconnaissance Branch, Operations and Commitments Division, Directorate of Operations, DCS/O. Additional material on some points was obtained from the Collection Operations Division, Deputy Director for Collection and Dissemination, Directorate of Intelligence, DCS/O. The United States Department of State was extremely helpful in making available from its classified

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2 For earlier overflights and their treatment see Oliver J. Lissitzyn, "The Treatment of Aerial Intruders in Recent Practice and International Law," The American Journal of International Law," Vol. 47, No. 4 (October, 1953).

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files materials that were useful for this study. At the time the study was made, some of the relevant materials were in use at the State Department and were not, therefore, available to the writer. Very little classified material of any kind has been seen for the period after early 1953; the case studies of incidents occurring in 1953, therefore, are based largely on open sources. Diplomatic notes on earlier incidents issued during 1954 have been incorporated into the analysis, but no new incidents occurring in 1954 have been included.

There are several specific limitations in the coverage of possible overflights which should be explicitly noted: (1) Cases in which the Soviets or their Satellites have charged the United States with espionage overflights have not been checked against classified data on U.S. covert operations. (2) Cases of real or alleged overflight of Communist China after its entrance into the Korean war were excluded from the compilation. (3) We have not had access to official records of classified air operations that may have been conducted by other Western countries (e.g., Britain, Sweden) during the postwar period. (4) Our coverage of actual or alleged violations of the Berlin and Vienna air corridors is undoubtedly incomplete. (5) The case study on Soviet reconnaissance flights of the Western Hemisphere since 1952 is based solely upon disclosures which have appeared from time to time in the American press.

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Despite its limitations and incompleteness, a compilation such as the present one may be of some use to intelligence analysts and policy planners as a reference handbook on air incidents which have taken place in the past.

The immediate purpose of these studies, however, is to provide detailed documentation and elaboration for the analysis of various aspects of Soviet policy toward, and handling of, overflights and near overflights. The cases included in this collection have been studied from the viewpoint of interests and purposes that have motivated the overall research project, the results of which have been reported in RAND Research Memorandums 1346, 1347, and 1348.

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1. OVERFLIGHTS OF JAPAN[3] (1930-1941)

When Soviet overflights of northern Japan were occurring in the autumn of 1952, the Department of State requested the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to provide information on all air incidents and unauthorized overflights which had taken place over Japan prior to World War II. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo replied that it was unable to furnish complete information because many prewar U.S. Embassy records had been destroyed during the war, and because the Japanese government itself had only fragmentary records on the subject.

A survey of available records by the Japanese Minister of Justice brought to light only five known incidents from 1930 to World War II. Four were emergency landings on fields other than those designated. No legal action was instituted by the Japanese government in those four cases; in fact, the government gave utmost aid and co-operation to the personnel involved.

The fifth incident was the flight of Pangborn and Herndone in July-August, 1930. They entered Japan from Russia and landed in Tokyo without a permit. It is possible that they were fined 1,000 yen.

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3 American Embassy, Tokyo, to Department of State; circular airgram, October 20, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL. (Document classifications given throughout these volumes are the ones that obtained at the time the documents were consulted.)

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2. AIR VIOLATIONS IN JAPANESE-SOVIET RELATIONS[4] (1931-1941)

At the beginning of this period, Soviet leaders evidently viewed as probable a Japanese attack upon the Soviet Union in the Far East; they saw the relationship of forces in that area as markedly unfavorable to themselves. But they did not think that the Japanese threat endangered the existence of the Soviet regime unless it was coupled with an attack in Europe by Germany and/or Poland.

At the same time that they feared a Japanese attack, the Soviet leaders were also optimistic about the future. They evidently estimated that, with growing Soviet strength, grounds for serious concern over possible Japanese aggression would be minimized in a few years. Accordingly, Soviet policy in the early thirties played for time, hoping to deflect Japan's aggressive impetus until Soviet military strength in the Far East could be built up to a level sufficient to deter the Japanese or cope with an attack.

In the meantime, the Soviets made an effort to isolate the Japanese diplomatically and to discourage them from aggression against the U.S.S.R. Soviet diplomatic relations with China, which had been broken off in 1929, were resumed in December, 1932, when Japanese action in Manchuria posed a

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4 This case study is based solely on unclassified sources but bears a CONFIDENTIAL classification because of the interpretation provided.

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threat to the U.S.S.R. The Soviets also negotiated for diplomatic recognition by the United States as a means of discouraging Japanese aggressive designs. In Europe, finally, Soviet diplomats maneuvered with considerable success to dissuade and checkmate those who might be tempted to join Japan in an attack upon the U.S.S.R.

Confronted by a variety of Japanese encroachments and pressures in the early thirties, the Soviets at first adopted a conciliatory policy toward the Japanese. They attempted to accommodate Japanese demands to some extent, without giving up vital Soviet interests or territory. This conciliatory policy was not one of appeasement; it was merely that efforts were apparently made to avoid clashes with the Japanese over Soviet interests in Manchuria, along common ground frontiers, in the air, and on sea and river lanes.

During this time, the Soviets employed diplomatic protests and negotiation, rather than military countermeasures, as a means of opposing Japanese encroachments and pressure.

In December, 1933, Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov summarized and justified this conciliatory policy in the face of growing difficulties with Japan:

> ...the calmer and more patiently we behaved, the more provocative became the Japanese authorities in Manchuria. The impression created was that they were consciously provoking us to action more forceful than

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> protests. Not wishing to give in to this provocation, we made the proposal on May 2 of this year [1933] that Japan buy the Chinese Eastern Railway from us....[5]

In the early thirties, as Litvinov's account suggests, the dilemma of Soviet policy lay in deciding how best to handle the Japanese policy of calculated provocation and "testing." A conciliatory policy of accommodation ran the risk of being interpreted as weakness and of inviting further Japanese provocations. A policy of firmness, on the other hand, might very well suit the Japanese aim of embroiling the U.S.S.R. in a crisis that might lead to war. Forced to deal with the Japanese threat from a position of relative military weakness, Soviet leaders evidently feared the latter contingency more.

As the Japanese threat began to focus more directly upon Soviet territory proper, rather than on Manchuria, Soviet leaders were forced to reconsider their conciliatory policy. Litvinov, in his statement of December, 1933, noted that, despite conciliatory Soviet gestures, the Japanese had proceeded to concentrate forces near the Soviet frontier with Manchuria:

> In this way...a direct threat to our frontier was created. Under these circumstances there was nothing for our Government to do but to begin to fortify our frontier, transferring the necessary forces for that purpose and taking other military measures.[6]

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5 Report to the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., December, 1933.

6 Ibid.

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A turning point in Soviet-Japanese relations appears to have been reached in late 1935 and 1936. The Soviets thought that by this time the military balance of power in the Far East had changed sufficiently to permit the Soviets to take a firmer attitude. The reform and mechanization of the Soviet Armed Forces in 1935-1936, a strengthening of Soviet defenses in the Far East, and other developments which need not be mentioned here evidently left Soviet leaders less fearful than before of the outcome of a military clash with the Japanese. The stiffening Soviet attitude was manifest in Stalin's public warning, on March 1, that the U.S.S.R. would assist Outer Mongolia against attack or encroachment by the Japanese. This was followed on March 12, 1936, by a mutual assistance pact with the Mongol People's Republic.

By January 1, 1937, Joseph Grew, U.S. Ambassador in Tokyo, reported that "...we may be sure that the Soviet Government will continue to act on the principle that the only language understood by the Japanese is force, and that when struck, whether by a minor frontier incursion or by some broader form of aggression, the wisest policy is to strike back with double force."

It is important to note that the change from a conciliatory policy to one of firmness -- which occurred more gradually than is perhaps indicated in this telescoped account -- did not signify any change in the basic Soviet

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objective of avoiding a war with Japan if possible. The new policy of firmly defending Soviet rights and interests in the Far East did not denote a disposition on the part of the Soviet Union to take upon itself the task of smashing Japan's aggressive potential. The change, rather, was in the method of deterring a strong opponent who harbored aggressive intentions. The Politburo may have calculated that the new policy of reacting sharply to Japanese encroachments would make the prospect of expansion against the Soviet sphere in the Far East less attractive to Japanese leaders than that of expansion southward. But even when Japanese forces became bogged down in China, the Soviets were not ready, for a number of reasons, to provoke a military crisis with Japan.

In this conflict, Japanese air violations of Soviet territory played a relatively minor role. More important difficulties arose in connection with the Soviet-owned Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria, fisheries negotiations, shipping disputes, and frontier disagreements.

Though data on Soviet-Japanese air incidents are far from complete or reliable, the impression obtained from what is available is that the Soviet reaction to Japanese air encroachments was co-ordinated with its general policy for handling the Japanese threat, and that it shifted as overall policy shifted.

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(1) There was certainly no disposition on the part of the Soviets, even in the later thirties, to regard Japanese air violations (or other infringements of Soviet rights) as a cause for war. (The Japanese, in turn, were never ready to go to war over Soviet air violations.)

(2) It appears that the Soviets did not take direct military action against Japanese overflights in the early thirties, when their general policy was to conciliate and accommodate the Japanese. The Soviets may have decided not to attempt to shoot down Japanese air intruders at this time because of an inadequate Soviet air-defense capability and/or because of political considerations, such as a desire to avoid tension-producing incidents entailing possibly dangerous war risks.

(3) Following the build-up of Soviet military strength in the Far East and the adoption of a firmer overall policy toward Japanese pressure, the Soviets appear to have felt freer to take military counteraction against intruding Japanese planes.

(4) Air operations were evidently conducted by both sides in support of ground action in at least two major border clashes: the Changkufeng (Lake Hasan) incident in the summer of 1938, and the Nomanhan incident (Manchukuo-Outer Mongolia border) in the summer of 1939. In both these undeclared, limited wars, air power was not used immediately, but only after the ground fighting had continued for some time.

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In the Changkufeng incident, which broke out in late June, 1938, a Moscow communiqué asserted, as late as August 2, that Soviet ground and air forces had obeyed strict instructions to remain within Soviet territory, and Japanese reports of Soviet overflights of Manchukuo and Korea were denied.[7] On August 7, Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov closed an interview with Japanese Ambassador Shigemetsu with a declaration to the effect that the Soviets were determined in the future to use the strongest measures in border fighting, including the use of artillery and aviation. As early as August 3, Japanese accounts stated that, owing to Soviet air raids in Korea, blackout measures were being introduced in Tokyo and elsewhere. Japanese accounts also included frequent claims of Soviet planes downed over the battle area.

The activity of Japanese planes in the fray apparently received less attention in Soviet and Japanese accounts. According to a former Soviet air officer who took part in the campaign, however, Japanese reconnaissance flights penetrated as far as Khabarovsk. According to the same source, there were many air border violations by both sides, and neither side had compunctions about shooting down its opponent's

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7 It is reported that General Bluecher, commander of the entire Soviet Far Eastern front, was relieved by Moscow during the Changkufeng fighting in part because, fearing that a general war might result, he ordered Soviet aircraft not to engage Japanese planes. (Cf. General Alexei Markoff, "Stalin's Secret War Plans," Saturday Evening Post, September 20, 1952.)

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planes, though such incidents were not protested or publicized.[8]

In the Nomanhan incident, fighting broke out on May 11, 1939, and was suspended at the end of May for about three weeks. It was then resumed with both sides employing aviation. Judging from newspaper accounts, bombing operations were carried on well behind the lines.

(5) Soviet military assistance to the Chinese after the renewal of the Japanese invasion in 1937 included four completely staffed and equipped Soviet fighter squadrons and two bomber squadrons.

The willingness of the Soviets to shoot down Japanese air intruders in the later thirties, to reconnoiter Japanese territory, to employ air forces during the border wars of 1938 and 1939, and to give substantial air assistance to Chiang's forces in 1937-1939 were but part of the generally tough Soviet policy toward Japan. Since the Soviet objective was still to avoid a military showdown, the use of the Soviet air capability in this fashion was evidently not regarded as seriously increasing the risks of war. That is, the Soviets did not think that the Japanese would regard these activities

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8 Interview of former Soviet air officer by Leon Goure, of the RAND Corporation, January 3, 1953, CONFIDENTIAL. The source also indicated that, during the border clash, Russian planes bombed the rear lines of the Japanese forces, and also Korea, but not Formosa, which was outside the range of Soviet planes.

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as an act of war. Nor, evidently, did they fear that their air activities would have other consequences, immediate or remote, unfavorable to Soviet objectives and interests.

Data on alleged Soviet air intrusions over Manchukuo and Japanese territory in this period are also sketchy and generally of unknown reliability. Few cases are so well attested to as that of December, 1937, when a Soviet mail airplane came down in Manchuria and there were strong Soviet protests at the failure to release its crew and cargo.[9] The most ambitious account of alleged Soviet air intrusions of Japanese air space is presented in Manchoukuo--Soviet Border Issues, a book compiled by Noboru Hidaka and published by the Manchurian Daily News in 1938. This book, published in English, had the avowed purpose of bringing the Japanese point of view to Western audiences. It lists and describes a grand total of 539 border "outrages" by the Soviets up to 1938, of which 77 were "aerial invasions." Most of these alleged intrusions were said to have taken place on the eastern border (of the U.S.S.R. and Manchukuo) and to have involved reconnaissance flights.[10]

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9 Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941, Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, London, 1949, p. 189.

10 Sources (in addition to those cited above):
Claire L. Chennault, Way of a Fighter, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1949;
David Dallin, Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1942;

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3. POLISH AND RUMANIAN PROTESTS OF SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS (September, 1938)

In his political biography of Stalin, Isaac Deutscher notes that shortly before the Munich conference (September, 1938) half a dozen Russian aircraft were flown across Rumania to Czechoslovakia.[11] Although the Russians observed all air traffic regulations, the incident provoked a protest, first from Colonel Beck, the Polish foreign minister, then from his Rumanian colleague.[12]

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10 (Cont'd)

Joseph E. Davies, Mission to Moscow, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1941;
Jane Degras (comp.), Calendar of Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1948;
Isaac Deutscher, Stalin: A Political Biography, Oxford University Press, New York, 1949;
Foreign Relations of the United States: The Soviet Union (1933-39), Department of State, Washington, D.C., 1952;
Joseph Grew, Ten Years in Japan, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1944;
Harriet Moore, Soviet Far Eastern Policy, 1931-1945, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1945;
Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of International Affairs for 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, and 1938, London;
Clark W. Tirch, "Quasi-War between Japan and the U.S.S.R., 1937-1939," World Politics, Vol. 3, No. 2 (January, 1951);
Charles A. Willoughby, Shanghai Conspiracy: The Sorge Spy Ring, Dutton, New York, 1952;
Izvestiia, November 10, 1933; March 16 and 21, 1934; June 11, 1935; January 24, February 15, 20, and 23, March 14 and 17, 1936; April 12, 1938;
Japan Chronicle, March 8, 22, and 29, 1934; June 20, 1935; July 11, 1935;
The Times (London), February 25, March 18, 1936.

11 Stalin, p. 428.

12 Deutscher gives as his source Georges Bonnet's Défense de la Paix: De Washington au Quai d'Orsay, pp. 121-140.

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4. GERMAN PREHOSTILITIES AIR RECONNAISSANCE OF SOVIET TERRITORY PRIOR TO INVASION ON JUNE 22, 1941

German prehostilities reconnaissance of Soviet territory is the only historical occasion on which hostile air reconnaissance has been directed at the U.S.S.R. as part of a definite plan for full-scale military attack.

German aerial reconnaissance was on a considerable scale and evidently involved some rather deep penetrations of Soviet-held territory ("100 to 150 kilometers and more," according to the Soviets). This reconnaissance was detected and presumably analyzed by the Soviets as an indicator of Nazi intentions. We may assume that it was viewed by the Politburo, not as isolated hostile acts, but as part of the broader international situation.

The general state of Nazi-Soviet relations was a matter of increasing concern to the Politburo during the months before the attack, a concern that was doubtlessly aggravated by the possibility of an eventual drawing together of Nazi Germany on the one hand, and Britain and France on the other. Thus we may assume that decisions as to how to react by military, diplomatic, or propaganda means to Nazi overflights was dealt with by the Russians, not as a separate issue, but, rather, with reference to some overall Soviet plan for keeping the world balance of power from becoming unfavorable to the Soviet Union.

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Scale of Nazi Overflights of Soviet Territory

Overflight of U.S.S.R. territory by Nazi planes was on a considerable scale. The figures available come from Russian sources, but we have no reason to assume that they seriously exaggerate the scale of the Nazi effort. Each time a Nazi overflight was detected, the Soviet Border Patrol filed a protest with the German representatives at the border.[13] On four occasions in 1941 -- sometime in January, on March 28, on April 21, and on June 21 -- the Soviet Foreign Office protested these overflights in notes to the German Foreign Office.

In the third and fourth Soviet notes, the following number of air violations was noted:[14]

for the period March 27-April 18, 1941: 80 violations
for the period April 19-June 19, 1941: 180 violations.

An overall summary of the number of German air violations from January to June 21, 1941, was given by Pravda shortly after the Nazi invasion began. The number was listed as 324, and it was indicated that Moscow had protested diplomatically in January,

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13 Soviet note to German Foreign Office, June 21, 1941. R. J. Sontag and J. S. Beddie (eds.), Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, pp. 353-355.

14 A record of the first and second notes is not available; only the third and fourth notes are listed in Sontag and Beddie, op. cit. A Soviet diplomatic representative who received a German statement on the subject on May 17, 1941, remarked that German air violations were continuing and were frequent (ibid., p. 343).

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March, April, and June.[15] If the total given on this occasion was based, as seems likely, on the number of violations protested in all four Soviet notes, the number of violations protested in the first two notes (covering January to March 27) must have been 64. Together with the 260 violations mentioned in the third and fourth notes, this would account for the grand total of 324 given by Pravda.

Thus, there seems to have been a pronounced step-up in the frequency of Nazi overflights from January through June, 1941.

Lack of Soviet Military Countermeasures and Reprisals

No military countermeasures were taken against Nazi overflights; nor, insofar as we can establish, were reprisals in kind (Soviet reconnaissance of German territory) undertaken. The Politburo seems to have gone no further than to remind the German government that the permissive Soviet air-defense policy toward Nazi air intruders might have to be reconsidered:

> Consequently, the People's Commissariat deems it necessary to remind the German Embassy of the statement that was made on March 28, 1940, by the Assistant Military Attache of the Embassy of the U.S.S.R. in Berlin to Reich Marshal Goering, according to which the People's Commissar for Defense of the U.S.S.R. made an exception to the very strict measures for the protection of the Soviet border and

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15 Pravda, June 29, 1941, as cited in David Dallin, Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942, p. 365.

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> gave the border troops the order not to fire on the German planes flying over the Soviet territory so long as such flights do not occur frequently.[16]

There is no evidence that the implicit threat conveyed in this note was carried out by the Soviets in the two months preceding the Nazi attack.[17] Nor is evidence available that the Soviets engaged in reprisals, i.e., in counter aerial reconnaissance of German territory.[18]

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16 Soviet note verbale of April 21, 1941, cited in Sontag and Beddie, op. cit., p. 328.

17 The few accounts examined are contradictory and inconclusive on this point. One Russian colonel recalled that Soviet antiaircraft along the Soviet-German frontier had been ordered not to fire upon German observation planes. (Personal conversation reported by Charles W. Thayer in Hands across the Caviar, 1952, pp. 67-69.) Another Soviet colonel who had held a leading command position in a Red Air Force Fighter Division on the Eastern front could not recall any orders limiting action against German air intruders in the prehostilities period. He recalled having heard that some German planes had been forced down in the Kiev area by Soviet planes. (Interview of ex-Soviet colonel by Leon Goure, The RAND Corporation, January 3, 1953.)

18 Classified official correspondence in which leading Nazis made countercharges of Soviet air violations of German territory (e.g., Jodl's memorandum of April 23, 1941, to the German Foreign Office) should be viewed as possible efforts by top Nazi leaders to conceal their aggressive intention from subordinates in the hierarchy. The important thing is that the Nazis never formally protested any such alleged Soviet violations, although they were referred to verbally on at least one occasion by Weizsäcker when he received formal Soviet charges of German air violations (Sontag and Beddie, op. cit., p. 353). Even the final German note to the U.S.S.R., which in effect announced the German attack, did not include Soviet air violations in its documentation of Soviet aggressive intentions which had "forced" Germany to act (Sontag and Beddie, op. cit., pp. 347-349). Nor

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The Politburo may have ruled out both direct military action against Nazi overflights and air reconnaissance of Nazi territory for fear that such actions might prejudice the Soviet objective of maintaining the friendship pact with the Nazis and of reaching a diplomatic resolution of tensions then current between the two countries.

Soviet Diplomatic and Propaganda Handling of the Overflights

But, though scrupulously avoiding military counteraction or reprisals against Nazi overflights, Soviet leaders felt it expedient at least to register diplomatic protests against violations of their border. Two reasons for the policy of diplomatic protest may be noted.

First, the Soviets generally feel obliged to protest in some fashion any violation of their borders or of their rights over international waters.[19] While the preferred method of protest is direct action, verbal protests are considered obligatory as a substitute when the capability for action is lacking or the use of such a capability is deemed unduly risky.

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18 (Cont'd)
does General Halder, otherwise sensitive to any indications of Soviet offensive intentions, make any mention in his diary of Soviet prehostilities aerial reconnaissance, though he does refer to Nazi aerial reconnaissance over Soviet areas. Isaac Deutscher's statement that both sides were engaged in aerial reconnaissance of each other's territory is not documented (Stalin, p. 453).

19 See RAND Research Memorandum RM-1346, "Soviet Reactions to Border Flights and Overflights in Peacetime," (TOP SECRET) for evidence and argument in support of this conclusion.

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Accordingly, Nazi overflights could not be completely overlooked by the Soviets, even though political considerations ruled out direct military counteraction.

A second, more specific policy consideration lay behind at least the later Soviet diplomatic protests of Nazi overflights. In contrast to the Nazi military build-up along the German-Soviet border, which involved no technical or legal violation of Soviet rights, Nazi aerial reconnaissance did involve overflights of Soviet territory. Therefore, given the overall German-Soviet relationship, the overflights provided the Politburo with a particularly appropriate and convenient opportunity to disclose to the Nazis its nonbelligerent and accommodating attitude, and its general willingness to negotiate outstanding issues. And on at least one occasion (the fourth Soviet note protesting overflights on June 21) the real purpose of the protest was to find a pretext for engaging reluctant Nazi leaders in a diplomatic discussion of the entire state of Nazi-Soviet relations.[20]

Although, as we shall see below, the Politburo did not consider that German overflights indicated certain and imminent Nazi attack, the Soviet Foreign Office evidently wished to convey some concern in its notes. The protest notes of April 21 and June 21, while courteous and restrained in tone, conveyed this concern in several ways:

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20 Thus, in summoning the German ambassador on the eve of the attack, Molotov utilized the Soviet protest note of June 21 (regarding Nazi air violations) merely as a pretext or "hook" for asking what the Germans had against the Soviets and what they wanted (Sontag and Beddie, op. cit., p. 355).

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1. By noting a step-up in German air violations. (Notes of April 21 and June 21)

2. By reporting that in a German plane which had landed in Soviet-held territory (Rovno) "were found a camera, some rolls of exposed film, and a torn topographical map of the districts of the U.S.S.R., all of which gives evidence of the purpose of the crew of this airplane." (Note of April 21)[21]

3. By noting that the German government had made no reply to the previous Soviet protest. (Note of June 21)

4. By noting that the German air penetrations had assumed a "systematic character." (Note of June 21)

5. By noting that in some cases German aircraft penetrated "100 to 150 kilometers and more." (Note of June 21)

6. By explicitly drawing the conclusion that the "systematic nature" of the flights and the extent of the penetrations "preclude the possibility that these violations of the border of the U.S.S.R. by German aircraft could have been accidental." (Note of June 21)

Finally, we should note that the Soviet government did not make any propaganda statements on the subject of Nazi overflights. To have done so would have inevitably destroyed the public image of unimpaired Nazi-Soviet friendship which Soviet propaganda was actively attempting to maintain. The Politburo may have reasoned that any public mention of the Nazi overflights would have made it more difficult to engage the Nazis in serious diplomatic conversations. Similarly, any

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21 This incident was not publicized by the Soviets. And the Nazis not only did not make any explanation or show embarrassment, but they requested the Soviets to return the plane! (Ibid., p. 343). It is not known whether the Soviets complied.

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Soviet publicity might have encouraged those in Germany, France, and England who continued to hope for a coalition of their countries against the U.S.S.R. Therefore, the Nazi overflights and Soviet diplomatic notes protesting them were not publicly disclosed by the Soviets until after the Nazi invasion.

Soviet Estimate of Nazi Overflights as an Indicator of Nazi Intentions

Nazi aerial reconnaissance of Soviet territory was but one of many indicators of Nazi intentions available to Soviet intelligence. The widespread and impressive Nazi military build-up along the Soviet border could not be concealed, and there were, in addition, a number of other warnings.

It is not the purpose of the present report to examine the development of Nazi-Soviet relations prior to the invasion, or to account in detail for the evident failure of the Politburo to estimate Nazi intentions correctly.[22] Nor will it be possible in this brief account to cite the evidence, mostly of an indirect character, for the conclusion that the Politburo was at least tactically surprised by the Nazi attack. Even at the last moment before the Nazi invasion, Soviet leaders appear to have believed that there would be an opportunity to engage the Nazis in serious diplomatic discussions, and possibly to

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22 For help with sources and interpretations, the writer is indebted to Leon Goure, of the RAND staff, who has in preparation a detailed study of Nazi-Soviet relations during this period. Among the hypotheses tentatively

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accommodate them. In other words, despite numerous indicators of the Nazi intention, Soviet leaders evidently regarded an attack as neither certain nor imminent. It is difficult to account otherwise for the fact that Soviet defensive forces were not placed in a state of alert and were thus, in most cases, completely surprised by the Nazi attack. Significant, also, are the Politburo's attempts -- the last of which came even while the attack was beginning -- to engage the Nazi leaders in diplomatic bargaining by getting them to state the reasons for their displeasure with the U.S.S.R.

We may infer, therefore, that knowledge of Nazi overflights did not succeed in significantly altering the overall Soviet estimate of Nazi intentions. No special importance appears to have been attached to reconnaissance overflights as an indicator.

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22 (Cont'd)

advanced by Mr. Goure to account for the Politburo's incorrect estimate of the Nazi intention are the following: (1) Stalin thought that Hitler, like himself, was a "reasonable" and "cautious" man who would not run unnecessary risks; (2) the Politburo did not conceive that Hitler would place such a low estimate upon the Soviet capability for prolonged resistance against a German attack; (3) the Politburo expected that Hitler would respond to intimations of Soviet willingness to consider German wishes and demands, and that an opportunity for discussion and negotiation would materialize; (4) the Politburo thought that Hitler was bluffing (for a number of reasons which cannot be considered here); (5) the Politburo thought that Hitler would not attack without some sort of political preparation designed to provide a plausible justification.

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Conclusion

The overall policy adopted by the Politburo for dealing with the Nazi threat was based upon this incorrect estimate of Nazi intentions. Evidently it was thought that, if Nazi military preparations did in fact point to an attack upon the U.S.S.R., such action was not yet imminent and/or the Nazi intention to attack was not yet firm. The Nazi reconnaissance overflights did not alter this estimate. The Politburo apparently did not feel obliged, in the light of the overflights, to reconsider the correctness of its policy of dealing with the Nazi threat by diplomatic rather than military means.

The Politburo's disinclination to start a war over Nazi aerial reconnaissance and the permissive attitude adopted by Soviet air-defense forces must be understood with reference to the special balance of power context in which they occurred. We cannot be certain that we have accurately assessed the reasons for Soviet passivity in this situation. Nor can we be certain that the Soviets would calculate in the same fashion if faced with hostile overflights by another power in the future. In particular, we cannot say what lessons, if any, Soviet leaders have drawn from their mishandling of the Nazi threat in 1941, and how this experience may affect their reaction to new opponents considered to be potential aggressors.

The predictive value of findings from the present case study is further limited by the emergence of atomic and

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thermonuclear weapons. The risk in tolerating overflights by hostile reconnaissance planes will be judged by the Soviets to be much greater if these planes are thought to be capable of carrying the new weapons. This does not necessarily mean that penetrations by hostile planes capable of carrying the new weapons will automatically lead to war. But it does make it less likely that the passive policy toward Nazi overflights will be repeated if such planes attempt to make important penetrations of Soviet air space with any frequency.

A repetition of Soviet passivity in the face of systematic prehostilities reconnaissance overflights is less likely at present and in the future for other reasons as well. The Nazi overflights took place in a traditional multi-state balance-of-power situation. A friendship pact, which the Soviets at least wished to continue for the time being, was in effect between Germany and the U.S.S.R. In part for this reason, the Politburo may well have ruled out hostile military counteraction against Nazi overflights. In contrast, the international setting of the postwar world is unique in that there is marked bipolarization around two major powers, the United States and the U.S.S.R. It seems unlikely that, in this new international setting, there could be a friendship pact between the United States and the U.S.S.R. which would exercise a restraining influence on Soviet reactions to systematic U.S. overflights. Soviet restraint, if any, would have to be motivated by different considerations.

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5. SOVIET VIOLATIONS OF SCAP AIR REGULATIONS OVER OCCUPIED JAPAN (1945-1947)

Soviet flights into Japan during this period were subject to the regulations and control of SCAP. On August 20, 1946, during the tense diplomatic dispute with Yugoslavia over the shooting down of two U.S. transports, an authoritative disclosure was made in Washington regarding hitherto unpublicized Soviet violations of air regulations over Japan:

> Several high [U.S.] official and military sources confirmed reports that Russian planes, which are supposed to follow a specified route from Vladivostok to Tokyo, frequently flew far off course. American planes have held their fire but have radioed the Russian planes to get back on course. In a number of instances, the official sources said, the Russian aviators ignored the warnings and simply took evasive action to shake off the American planes....Our policy has been to avoid incidents, so the Russian planes have not been attacked.[23]

In August, 1947, SCAP protested to Soviet representatives in Japan that regulations requiring advance notification of incoming Soviet flights were being violated. On November 4, 1947, SCAP grounded two Soviet aircraft for violation of SCAP flight regulations; it also informed Soviet authorities in Japan that no further Soviet aircraft would be cleared for entry into Japan. It was SCAP's estimate that repeated Soviet violation of well-understood air-traffic control regulations

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23 The New York Times, August 21, 1946.

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for Japan probably had an ulterior intelligence objective: namely, to discover existing U.S. security capabilities in areas other than routes of prescribed travel.[24]

6. U.S. NAVY PLANE FIRED UPON BY SOVIET PLANE OFF PORT ARTHUR (October 15, 1945)

This incident was evidently not publicly disclosed by either side until a similar incident took place off Dairen on February 20, 1946, when the U.S. Navy disclosed both incidents, and an account of diplomatic communications exchanged privately over the first incident.

On October 15, 1945, a Navy Mariner plane, said to have been on a routine shipping identification mission in the Gulf of Chihli, passed within a mile of Port Arthur, which had been recently occupied by Soviet forces under the terms of the Soviet-Chinese (Nationalist) treaty of August 14, 1945. The Navy plane was leaving the area and had reached a point twenty-five miles at sea from Dairen when it was overtaken by a Russian fighter which opened fire during one of its several approaches.

It is not entirely clear whether the Russian fighter is considered to have fired for warning purposes only or with

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[24] SCAP cable to U.S. Embassy in Moscow; SECRET.

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hostile intent. The U.S. Navy account did not state whether the Mariner had been damaged; nor was there mention of return fire. Press reports based on the U.S. Navy account of the incident did not exclude the possibility that the Navy plane had suffered damage. That the U.S. Navy did not consider the fire from the Soviet plane as merely a warning was perhaps implied in its protest of the action as a hostile act. On the other hand, it is possible that the Navy accepted the incident as a warning but called it hostile because it took place beyond the three-mile territorial waters limit.

The U.S. protest was made by the U.S. naval attaché in Moscow directly to the Soviet Navy Department. The Soviet Navy replied (according to the account released later by the U.S. Navy) that, according to the Soviet-Chinese treaty of August 14, 1945, the defense of Port Arthur was a Soviet responsibility, and that U.S. planes might not enter boundaries of the Soviet naval base at Port Arthur and Dairen or approach within twelve miles of the coast at these points without obtaining permission in each case from the Soviet military command.[25]

Significance

In the absence of more definite information, the Soviet intention in this case is being regarded as nonhostile;

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25 The New York Times, March 2, 1946; The New York Herald Tribune, March 2, 1946; no classified accounts have been available.

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otherwise, this would be the first occasion in the postwar period on which the Soviets would have attempted to shoot down a foreign plane alleged to have been intruding upon Soviet territory or territorial waters.

We have been unable to find any Soviet publicity given to this incident. Accordingly, the U.S. Navy is regarded as having (belatedly) initiated public disclosure of the incident. Thus, this case constitutes particularly good evidence of the Soviet willingness to let such incidents remain the private knowledge of the governments concerned.

It would seem, also, that the Soviets did not initiate diplomatic (private) disclosure by protesting the violation, but that such disclosure, too, was made by the United States. Therefore, this case provides evidence also for the general hypothesis of this study that the Soviets usually prefer their military counteractions against aerial encroachments (alleged or otherwise) to speak for themselves.

The incident raised, for the first time in the postwar period, other problems in international law which were to be of continuing interest in the next few years, as Soviet policy toward air intrusion became better defined and more hostile.

The Soviet Assertion of a Twelve-Mile Territorial-Waters Limit

We have noted that, in reply to the U.S. Navy protest, the Soviets stated that U.S. planes might not approach

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within twelve miles of the Soviet coast without first obtaining permission. (Under international law, other powers claim a territorial-waters limit of only three miles.) The U.S. Navy noted in reply that they had not been previously informed of the Soviet intention to apply the twelve-mile limit to Soviet-occupied territory as well as to Soviet territory proper.

The Problem of "Hot Pursuit"

We have noted that the Russian fighter intercepted the Navy plane when it was twenty-five miles away from Port Arthur. The incident, therefore, also raised the question whether the Soviets were claiming the right to apply the doctrine of "hot pursuit" with regard to air violations. The second U.S. Navy communication noted that the Soviet reply had not explained why the Navy plane had been fired upon twenty-five miles away. It is not known whether the U.S. Navy explicitly queried the Soviet right of hot pursuit. In any event, no further reply was received from the Soviets, a fact that was noted in the U.S. Navy statement to the press on March 1, 1946.

7. SOVIET VIOLATIONS OF AIR REGULATIONS OVER OCCUPIED GERMANY (1945-1946)

On August 20, 1946 -- in the course of a tense diplomatic dispute with Yugoslavia over the shooting down of two U.S. air

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transports -- an authoritative disclosure was made in Washington regarding hitherto unpublicized Soviet violations of air regulations over Germany.

Russian planes were said to have habitually deviated from their prescribed courses over the American zone of Germany. U.S. policy was to avoid incidents; accordingly, American military planes withheld fire in such instances and radioed Russian planes to get back on course. In a number of incidents, the Russian planes were said to have ignored the warnings and to have taken evasive action in order to shake off the American planes.[26]

8. SOVIET FIGHTER PLANES FIRE WARNING BURSTS AT U.S. NAVY PLANE OFF DAIREN (February 20, 1946)

On February 20, 1946, while on a flight from its base in Tsingtao, China, a U.S. Navy plane flew near Dairen. Two Soviet planes intercepted this plane and fired warning bursts at it for about ten minutes. According to a public announcement by the U.S. Navy, the Navy plane was not hit, and returned to its base. There was no mention of return fire on the part of the Navy plane. Evidently, an overflight was committed, for the Navy also announced that disciplinary action was being

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26 The New York Times, August 21, 1946; this disclosure also referred to Soviet violations of SCAP air regulations over Japan, which have been dealt with in case study No. 5.

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taken against the pilot in question for having gone inland contrary to orders.

It would seem that public disclosure of the encounter would not have been made by the U.S. Navy were it not for the fact that an erroneous account of the incident, attributed to high U.S. government officials, leaked to the press. According to this erroneous account, the pilot of the Navy patrol plane became confused as to his position, and thought he was over a Chinese city when he was in fact over Port Arthur (sic). The Navy pilot buzzed an airfield, flying low over it. As he pulled his plane away from the field, Russian fighter planes began a chase, overtaking him between Port Arthur and Chanshan Island. The Soviet planes, according to the erroneous account, shot away the Navy plane's aerial and made other hits as well, damaging the plane but not wounding any of the eight-man crew. At the State Department, according to the press, the view generally expressed was that the American pilot, even though he had lost his bearings, had no legal right to fly over the area controlled by the Russians under agreement with Chiang's government.[27]

The U.S. Navy announcement, which gave the facts of this incident, also indicated that the Soviet government was being informed that the action of the Soviet fighters in opening fire was unjustifiable in view of the friendly relations existing

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27 The New York Times, March 2, 1946.

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between the two countries. The U.S. Navy protest to the Soviet Navy Department also pointed out that Dairen had been declared a free port under the Soviet-Chinese treaty of August, 1945.[28]

In disclosing the incident of February 20, 1946, the U.S. Navy also disclosed -- apparently for the first time -- a similar incident that had occurred off Port Arthur on October 15, 1945.[29]

Significance

As in the case of the incident of October 15, 1945 (case study No. 6), Soviet policy toward this overflight was, despite the resort to warning fire, a nonhostile one.

Once again, the Soviets revealed a preference for not disclosing, either diplomatically or publicly, incidents in which some action had been taken by Soviet air defenses. As in the October incident, the initiative, both in diplomatic and public disclosure, was evidently taken by the United States.

There is no indication, in records examined, of any Soviet reply to the American diplomatic protest, nor of any Soviet publicity given to the case. However, though no reply was mentioned in the U.S. Navy announcement of March 1, 1946, the possibility of a later Soviet note cannot be ruled out.[30]

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28 The New York Herald Tribune, March 2, 1946.

29 See case study No. 6.

30 Classified sources on this incident have not been consulted.

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Soviet motives in resorting to warning fire in this (and possibly the earlier) incident were suggested by information which the press attributed at the time to U.S. officials. According to these accounts, reports over a period of months had indicated that the Russians were taking the greatest precautions to protect their installations in the China area against American or other foreign observation, whether deliberate or accidental. Some weeks previously, for example, one of the Chinese-American truce teams set up by General Marshall to restore peace in China had been refused the right to make a landing at a Soviet-held city in the interior of China. The pilot had got lost, sought permission to land at the Russian field, but was refused.[31] An eye-witness account from Dairen, by Associated Press correspondent Richard Cushing, reported full-dress Red Army maneuvers over extensive areas north of Dairen.[32]

The Soviet policy of limited, nonhostile military opposition to air intruders in this area might be said to have been motivated by a fear of "yielding" to minor encroachments against rights newly won in the August 1945 treaty with Nationalist China. Soviet insistence on regulating foreign flights in this area might also have been due in part to a

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31 The New York Times, March 2, 1946.

32 Associated Press dispatch of February 26, published in The New York Times, March 3, 1946.

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desire to retaliate in kind for SCAP regulation of Soviet flights into Japan.[33]

9. SOVIET PROTEST AGAINST THREE U.S. OVERFLIGHTS OF BIG DIOMEDE ISLAND (BERING STRAITS) (Between March 8, 1946, and January 31, 1947)

A Soviet note to the United States, on February 25, 1947, protested three alleged air violations of Big Diomede Island. The United States reply on March 5, 1947, indicated that no conscious violations had occurred, but that possibly unintentional overflights had been made as a result of bad weather over the Bering Straits.[34]

Apparently neither side made a public disclosure of the incident, or of the exchange of diplomatic notes.[35]

Significance

In the absence of military interception, the Soviet reaction took the form of diplomatic protest. This is in contrast to the Soviet reaction to "violations" by U.S. Navy planes in 1945 and 1946, in which the action itself was apparently deemed a clear enough indication of the Soviet attitude to make a diplomatic protest superfluous.[36]

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33 See case study No. 5.

34 State Department files; RESTRICTED.

35 Nothing on the subject could be found in The New York Times.

36 See case studies Nos. 6 and 8.

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10. SOVIET PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATION OF IRANIAN-SOVIET BORDER (April 5, 1946)

On April 15, 1946, the Soviet Foreign Office directed a "complaint" to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow charging that, on April 5, a two-engine U.S. plane had crossed the Soviet-Iranian border in the vicinity of Astara and had penetrated 6 km. into Soviet territory. The Soviet spokesman, Mikhailov, said it was not the first incident of this sort; he said that several U.S. flights had also taken place over the Soviet zone of occupation in Iran. U.S. Ambassador Bedell Smith promised an immediate investigation.[37]

Apparently neither the Soviet Union nor the United States made a public disclosure of the incident, or of the Soviet diplomatic complaint,[38] and further details are lacking. It will be noted that the Soviet complaint was made at a time when the U.S.S.R. was under Western diplomatic pressure to remove its troops from northern Iran.

11. SOVIET HARASSMENT OF U.S. FLIGHTS IN VIENNA AIR CORRIDOR (1946)

General Mark W. Clark, at one time American High Commissioner for Austria, has described Soviet efforts to harass U.S. flights

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37 U.S. Embassy, Moscow (Smith), to Secretary of State, No. 1212, April 16, 1946; CONFIDENTIAL.

38 Nothing about the incident could be found in The New York Times.

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in the Vienna air corridor during the first part of 1946:

> The Russians had stipulated that our planes must follow a narrow corridor while flying over Soviet-occupied territory. This, of course, was inconvenient, but we observed the rule. As relations deteriorated, however, our craft began having trouble with Soviet planes which suddenly would appear along the route, flying close to ours as if intending to crash them and, eventually, firing their guns in the direction of our planes.
>
> On several occasions I officially informed Konev (Soviet High Commissioner) of these incidents and asked him to put an end to them. In each case he replied that he had investigated and found that there were no Russian planes anywhere near the scene of the alleged incident, and that, since no Russians were there, they could not possibly have fired on or otherwise harassed our craft. No matter what was said, he always came back to that point--no Russians were there. At one time, when a number of witnesses were available to show that Soviet anti-aircraft had fired on American planes, Konev blandly replied that there was no Soviet anti-aircraft in that area. After a number of such incidents, I decided that only force would do any good. There was no question in my mind that the Russians were making the attacks, because my own plane had been fired on. So I ordered the American planes armed and I formally advised Konev that from that day on any Russian plane that made a threatening gesture at an American plane would do so at its own risk. I added that my instructions to the American gunners were to shoot first if they felt that they were in danger. We didn't have a single aerial incident after that.[39]

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[39] Mark Clark, Calculated Risk, Harper & Bros., New York, 1950, pp. 472-73. In the course of the diplomatic dispute engendered by the shooting down of a U.S. military transport over Yugoslavia, the Associated Press reported from Rome, on August 11, 1946, that "...The Russians...have indicated their displeasure over such flights by buzzing U.S. planes that attempted to land at Tulln. Threatening Russian action against U.S. planes and the field itself ceased after U.S. protests." (The New York Times, August 12, 1946.) (See also case study No. 12.)

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Significance

Apart from the fact that the Soviets retreated from an aggressive air policy under the threat of American military counteraction, this case is interesting for the light it sheds on Soviet diplomatic policy. Thus, if we may generalize from this one case, when taking particularly outrageous extralegal actions, the Soviets prefer, if challenged, simply to deny responsibility rather than attempt to justify their actions.

Such diplomatic behavior contrasts with that adopted by the Soviets after the Baltic incident of April, 1950, when they began to shoot down foreign planes which approached the Soviet perimeter. In most cases after this date, the Soviets took responsibility for their actions and defended them by appropriate legal arguments, even when they sometimes went out of their way to shoot down a plane over international waters. They did not deny the incidents.

But the denial tactic was encountered again in late 1952 and early 1953. At that time, the Soviet government simply refused to acknowledge, either privately or publicly, that Soviet planes had been present over Hokkaido, even though such planes had been detected and, in some cases, intercepted and damaged.[40]

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[40] See case study No. 138 in RAND RM-1349, Supplement (TOP SECRET).

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12. TWO U.S. MILITARY PLANES FIRED UPON BY SOVIET FIGHTER PLANES OVER AUSTRIA[41] (April 22, 1946)

On April 22, 1946, four Russian fighter planes fired shots off the wing of a U.S. Army C-47 transport plane as it came in for a landing at Tulln Airport, just outside of Vienna. Captain James G. Baxter, pilot of the plane, which was on a test flight with no passengers, reported the incident to the airport control tower before bringing the plane down. Four members of the crew supported Captain Baxter's report that the Russians fired between two and four 37 mm. cannon shots, and they said that the Soviet fighters were so close at the time that the concussion could be felt inside the American plane.

Airmen at the field identified the Russian fighters as outmoded P-39's, which had been furnished to Russia under lend-lease during World War II. The Soviet fighters followed the U.S. transport plane over the field and left after it touched the ground.[42]

Several days later, on April 24, it was disclosed that, prior to the C-47 incident, another unarmed U.S. plane had been

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41 These incidents came to the writer's attention after the completion of RAND RM's 1346, 1347, and 1348 and, therefore, were not taken into account in the analysis of Soviet policy there presented.

42 The New York Times, April 23, 1946.

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shot at by Soviet planes. Both these incidents were reported to have been protested by General Mark W. Clark. The date of the second incident was not given.[43]

It is not clear whether Soviet fire in these two cases was with hostile intent.[44]

13. YUGOSLAV-U.S. AIR INCIDENTS[45] (August 9 and 19, 1946)

A serious diplomatic controversy developed in August, 1946, following hostile Yugoslav air-defense actions against two U.S. planes that made unauthorized overflights of Yugoslavia. Both American planes were unarmed military transports (C-47's), which were flying from Vienna to Udine in northern Italy; this route passes a point that is close to three countries: Austria, Italy, and Yugoslavia.

On August 9, the U.S. plane flying this route was forced by repeated machine-gun fire from a Yugoslav fighter to crash-land in a field near Ljubljana. One passenger was severely wounded, and the aircraft badly damaged.

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43 The New York Times, April 25, 1946. In a summary of past incidents given in its issue of September 6, 1954, the Times identified the U.S. plane involved in this incident as a Flying Fortress, and gave as the date of occurrence April 22, 1946. The date of the C-47 incident was given as April 21, 1946, in this summary.

44 See also case study No. 11.

45 The account of these incidents is based entirely on unclassified sources; however, reference to other incidents necessitates a SECRET classification.

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A second incident followed ten days later, on August 19. This time all five occupants of the U.S. transport lost their lives when their plane was shot down by Yugoslav fighters near Bled.

The facts of the two incidents were disputed in official Yugoslav and U.S. communications. The United States asserted that American military aircraft were under instructions to avoid flying over Yugoslavia, and that if overflights occurred they were unintentional and the result of bad weather. Yugoslavia denied that the weather had been bad in nearby areas at the time the incidents took place.

The United States charged that Yugoslav fighters had opened fire against the first plane without adequate warning, and that the plane was fired upon again while descending in an effort to land. Yugoslavia did not effectively contest this charge, but, with regard to the second incident, she alleged that the American aircraft was repeatedly "invited" to land for a period of twelve to fifteen minutes before the shooting, and that the signals were ignored. Strong doubts about the correctness of this allegation were expressed by the United States on the ground that, at the time of the alleged warning, the American pilot had reported the plane over Klagenfurt, Austria.[46]

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46 For a more detailed account of official versions of what occurred in these two incidents see Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 15, pp. 415-419, 501-505, 544, 725; The New York Times for August, September, and October 4, 1946; and Oliver J. Lissitzyn, "The Treatment of Aerial Intruders in Recent Practice and International Law," The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 47, No. 4, October, 1953, pp. 569-573.

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With the disputed facts of these two air incidents the present report will not concern itself. It should be noted that the diplomatic controversy hinged, not on the question of whether a violation of Yugoslav air space had occurred, but on (1) whether the Yugoslav fighters had, as claimed, warned the U.S. planes to land before opening fire and, particularly, (2) whether they were in any case justified in shooting down planes of a friendly power.

Significance

The Yugoslav action was the first hostile incident of its kind in the post-World War II period. As such, it constituted a test case for both the communist and the noncommunist powers. Thus, while the resolution of the dispute did not provide a clear answer to all the questions it raised about the treatment of aerial intruders, it may be assumed that the diplomatic exchange was followed closely by Moscow, and that it may have had some influence on subsequent Soviet attitudes and policies toward air violations of their own borders.

At the time these incidents occurred, U.S.-Yugoslav relations had already deteriorated seriously. The major source of friction was Allied opposition to Yugoslav claims on Italy. The situation was tense along the "Morgan Line," which separated Allied and Yugoslav military forces in the Trieste area. Incidents were occurring frequently along this frontier,

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and Yugoslav military intentions were of concern to the Western powers.

Yugoslavs Modify Their Air-Defense Policy under U.S. Pressure

The most significant result of the dispute was that strong U.S. pressure forced Tito to withdraw the air-defense policy which had led to the two incidents.

After the second incident, on August 21, the United States announced that it was giving the Yugoslav government a formal 48-hour ultimatum. The demands were: (a) immediate release of "the occupants of these planes now in your custody"; and (b) permission for American representatives to "communicate with any of the occupants of the two planes who are still alive."[47]

The demands themselves were not far-reaching. But, for three reasons, the Yugoslavs may have interpreted the American ultimatum more gravely than the explicit demands appeared to warrant. First, the ultimatum followed closely upon a U.S. note on the previous day, August 20, which had requested that Yugoslavia give explicit assurance of innocent passage to lost aircraft of a friendly power.[48] This request, though it was not repeated in the ultimatum of August 21, may well have been

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47 Department of State Bulletin, September 1, 1946, pp. 417-418.

48 Ibid., pp. 415-416.

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considered by the Yugoslav government as part and parcel of the demands now being made.

Secondly, the language of the American ultimatum appeared to be more stern than seemed called for by the two specific demands.

Finally, the ultimatum hinted broadly that more than mere acceptance of the two demands would be necessary to satisfy the United States:

> If within 48 hours from receipt of this note by the Yugoslav Government these demands are complied with, the United States Government will determine its course in the light of the evidence then secured and the efforts of the Yugoslav Government to right the wrong done.

The U.S. ultimatum was handed to the Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires in Washington by Acting Secretary of State Acheson on August 21, and it was made public simultaneously. On the following day it was read to Tito by U.S. Ambassador Patterson. But, in the brief interim, Tito had moved quickly to meet the U.S. demands and to alleviate tension:

1. The occupants of the C-47 involved in the incident of August 9 were released, except for a wounded Turkish officer who had been a passenger.

2. U.S. diplomatic representatives were told that they could inspect both the aircraft that had been damaged on August 9 and the wreckage of the incident of August 19.

3. In written answers to the questions of two U.S. reporters, Tito said he had given "the strictest orders to Yugoslav Fourth Army commanders not to fire on foreign planes, civil or military." He

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> gave explicit assurance that, in the event other planes flew over Yugoslav territory without clearance, they would not be shot down. The procedure followed by Yugoslav forces on August 9 and 19, Tito said, "will not be repeated."[49]

The third assurance, which was an unmistakable retreat from the air-defense policy in effect on August 9 and 19, was repeated by Tito orally in the meeting with U.S. Ambassador Patterson at Bled on August 22. At this meeting, Tito evidently agreed to put his statements in writing. However, his letter to Ambassador Patterson on the following day omitted both the expression of regret and the assurance against further occurrences, which he had conveyed orally.[50] These omissions were noted by Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson at his news conferences on August 27 and 30.[51] Placed under additional pressure by Ambassador Patterson at a second meeting, at the end of August, Tito gave a written assurance and a formal apology in a note dated August 31.[52]

In giving such assurance, Tito in effect substantially modified Yugoslav air-defense policy. But the precise character of the new air-defense policy implicit in Tito's official assurance to the United States was not entirely clear. This assurance had been given by Tito on three separate occasions

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49 Dispatch of August 22, 1946, from Bled, Yugoslavia, by Arthur M. Brandel, published in The New York Times, August 23, 1946.

50 Department of State Bulletin, September 1, 1946, p. 419.

51 The New York Times, August 28 and 31, 1946.

52 Department of State Bulletin, September 15, 1946, p. 505.

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and referred to on a fourth, but each time in slightly different form.[53] As a result, the new Yugoslav policy was unclear in the following respects: (1) whether all or only certain types of aircraft were covered by Tito's assurance; (2) whether the assurance held irrespective of number and frequency of unauthorized overflights.

Tito's first assurance to the American reporters on August 22 was apparently not qualified in any way. But his second assurance, given orally to Patterson later in the same day, contained seemingly contradictory phraseology. According to Patterson's account, Tito "has now given orders that no foreign planes are to be shot at under any circumstances. Incidents will not be repeated, /the/ Marshal said...." But a qualification was implied in the rest of Tito's statement, as paraphrased by Patterson: "Yugoslavia will always accept planes forced off course by weather trouble, loss of direction or mechanical difficulties in reasonable numbers...."[54]

In an intervening note on August 30, Tito coupled an allusion to his earlier oral assurance to Patterson with the following proviso: "...presuming that for its part the Government of the United States of America would undertake the steps necessary to prevent these /unauthorized/ flights, except

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53 Such differences appear in the English translations of the notes given in the Department of State Bulletin; the Yugoslav texts have not been consulted.

54 Department of State Bulletin, September 1, 1946, p. 418.

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in the case of emergency or bad weather, for which arrangements could be made by agreement between American and Yugoslav authorities."[55]

And finally, Tito's third assurance, given in his official written statement of August 31, noted that safe passage was assured all intruding "transport" planes.[56]

The final, written Yugoslav statement of August 31 is, of course, the most authoritative version of Tito's assurance. However, as has been implied in the preceding discussion, neither this statement nor those which preceded it could be taken as unambiguous declarations of policy toward subsequent unauthorized overflights. Nevertheless, although the exact extent of the modification of Yugoslav policy remained unclear, at least in certain cases failure to comply with a request to land was no longer to be regarded by the Yugoslavs as justifying resort to fire. Instead, the Yugoslavs agreed to limit themselves to a diplomatic complaint in these cases. In the written assurance of August 31, Tito stated that orders had been given to Yugoslav forces "to the effect that no transport planes must be fired at any more, even if they might intentionally fly over our territory without proper clearance, but that in such cases they should be invited to land; if they refuse to do so their

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55 Department of State Bulletin, September 15, 1946, p. 502.

56 The assurance to U.S. correspondents had referred to "foreign planes, civil or military"; the oral assurance to Patterson did not specify type of plane; and Tito's note of August 30 used the term "transports and other planes."

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identity should be taken and the Yugoslav Government informed [by Yugoslav military forces]... so that any necessary steps could be undertaken through appropriate channels."

The Yugoslav government's self-imposed limitation on its freedom of action against intruding planes obviously did not extend to all possible types of unauthorized overflight. Nonetheless, to the extent that it was more than a paper pledge, the commitment not to enforce a landing request made it more difficult to determine the motive of an intruding plane. Since the motive is not always immediately apparent, any limitation on the sovereign power's right to require such a plane to land limits its ability to determine whether there is hostile intent. In this sense, the U.S.-Yugoslav case had far-reaching implications, because any assurance that cases of aerial penetration will be taken up through diplomatic channels, rather than opposed directly, raises the possibility that a foreign power may attempt to use the opportunity for engaging in covert missions.

The Yugoslav concession to the American viewpoint in this case, therefore, entailed potentially important cold-war disadvantages for the communist powers and, conversely, potential advantages for the United States and noncommunist powers. It is not surprising that the Soviets later asserted an air-defense policy which, in effect, reclaimed full freedom of action for a sovereign government in dealing with air intruders.

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In addition to securing compliance with the ultimatum and exacting both an official written apology and an assurance against further occurrences of this sort, the United States also demanded that indemnities be paid by Yugoslavia before the case could be considered satisfactorily closed.

That a claim for indemnification would be advanced was implicit in the reference, in the American ultimatum, to the necessity for Yugoslavia "to right the wrong done." Indemnity claims were reported to have been presented by Ambassador Patterson to Tito in the meeting preceding Tito's note of August 31, which, according to the press, was stormy. On subsequent occasions, the U.S. State Department publicly noted the failure of the Yugoslav government to offer indemnification. Still further pressure on the Yugoslavs developed with the strike called in the United States on September 5 by American longshoremen, who, in retaliation for the shooting down of U.S. fliers, refused to load UNRRA shipments to Yugoslavia. This action was accompanied by public demands from various quarters in the United States for political and military retaliation. The strike was called off, on September 25, only after the State Department assured the longshoremen that most of the American demands had been met by Yugoslavia.

On October 9, it was announced that Yugoslavia had paid an indemnity of $150,000 for the five American lives that had been lost in the August 19 incident. The amount was said to approximate what the United States had demanded. But, as had

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been foreshadowed in earlier State Department comments, the Yugoslav government refused to pay damages for the two planes.[57]

The Question of International Law on the Treatment of Air Intruders

Several aspects of Yugoslav behavior in the two air incidents were denounced by the United States as violations of international law. Specifically, the United States argued that lost aircraft of a friendly nation had the right of assistance and the right of innocent passage; that the use of force without warning against planes making unauthorized intrusions without hostile intent was unjustified under international law, and was a violation of the United Nations Charter; and that consular officers should be given prompt access to plane and personnel in such cases, and that personnel should be promptly released.[58]

In its August 20 communication to the Yugoslav government the United States asserted that lost aircraft of a friendly nation had the right to assistance and, also, the right of innocent passage:

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57 The United States was reported in the press to have asked for a total of about $300,000 to cover indemnification for the lives of the crew and restitution for the two planes.

58 The reference to "without warning" in this context creates a possible ambiguity. In its stronger formulations, the U.S. position was that under no circumstances, with or without prior warning, was resort to force justified in such cases. That was, in fact, what Tito conceded in saying that the Yugoslavs would not use force when an air intruder disregarded a request to land, but would protest through diplomatic channels.

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> It would be assumed that the authorities of Yugoslavia would wish to render a maximum of assistance and succor to aircraft of a friendly nation when the latter are forced by hazards of navigation in bad weather over dangerous mountain barriers to deviate from their course and seek bearings over Yugoslav territory....

And the U.S. note requested

> ...an urgent Yugoslav statement whether in the future the U.S. Government can expect that the Yugoslav Government will accord the usual courtesies, including the right of innocent passage over Yugoslav territory to U.S. aircraft when stress of weather necessitates such deviation from regular routes.[59]

In its ultimatum of August 21, the United States government condemned the Yugoslav actions in the two incidents as violations of the United Nations Charter:

> Regardless of whether the planes were a short distance within or without the corridor, they were unarmed passenger planes en route to Udine, in Italy. Their flight in no way constituted a threat to the sovereignty of Yugoslavia. The use of force by Yugoslavia under the circumstances was without the slightest justification in international law; was clearly inconsistent with relations between friendly States, and was a plain violation of the obligations resting upon Yugoslavia under the Charter of the United Nations not to use force except in self-defense.[60]

The ultimatum further noted that at no time had the Yugoslav government advised the United States government that unintentional overflights of a minor character by U.S. planes, because of weather difficulties, etc., would mean that Yugoslav forces would shoot to kill. The note concluded that the

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59 Department of State Bulletin, September 1, 1946, pp. 415-416.

60 Ibid., pp. 417-418.

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Yugoslav actions of August 9 and 19 were "an offense against the law of nations and the principles of humanity."

It should be noted, too, that the threat behind the U.S. ultimatum was that, if Yugoslavia did not comply with its demands, the U.S. government would call upon the Security Council of the United Nations "to meet promptly and to take appropriate action."

Because the controversy between the two governments was argued at least to some extent in the context of international law, the resolution of the dispute may be regarded as having some significance for the development of an international law on the treatment of air intruders. Tito's assurance against a repetition of such incidents, however, did not imply full acceptance of the legal position taken by the United States. There is, rather, some reason to believe that Tito's modification of Yugoslav air-defense policy did not entail a corresponding modification of the Yugoslav view of the international law governing such matters.

Since the Yugoslav government did not state its legal position during the dispute as explicitly as the United States did, the extent to which it conceded the correctness of the U.S. position is a matter for interpretation by specialists on the subject. Lissitzyn, for example, cautiously states that "The Yugoslav Government appears to have acquiesced in the legal position of the United States with respect to military

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aircraft forced by stress of weather to make an unauthorized flight over foreign territory." But his later discussion of the point appears to qualify and delimit the scope of this statement.[61] For there are indications that the Yugoslav government reserved its position on some points of law. Thus, in giving his written assurance against repetition of such incidents in his note of August 31, Tito hedged his expression of regret that American lives had been lost by asserting that the American plane had crashed "after disobeying signals to land."[62] Further, the Yugoslav offer to pay $30,000 to the family of each of the lost American airmen was represented as having been "inspired by human feelings." The implication that this was not a matter of legal obligation was reinforced by an express denial of responsibility for the "accident" and the assertion that the American planes "illegally flew over the Yugoslav territory and the damage was caused through the fault of the /American/ crew, which did not obey orders of the Yugoslav authorities to land."[63] Finally, the Yugoslavs gave further point to their position by refusing to pay compensation for the destruction of the two American aircraft.

It would appear, then, that the official assurance of August 31 to the effect that force would not be used thereafter to enforce a landing request was primarily a modification of

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61 Op. cit., pp. 572-573.

62 Department of State Bulletin, September 15, 1946; p. 505.

63 The New York Times, October 10, 1946.

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policy, and that some effort was made to maintain inviolate the Yugoslav legal position. The statements cited immediately above appear, in effect, to define the Yugoslav position in international law as follows: a sovereign power has the right to use force to secure compliance when an intruding aircraft disregards instructions to land.[64] If this interpretation is correct, then in effect Tito agreed, as a matter of policy, not to use force when an air intruder refused a landing request, but did not concede his right under international law to do so.

It is possible, of course, that Tito was less interested in maintaining an international position per se than he was in minimizing loss of prestige entailed by having to modify his air-defense policy under United States pressure. Or he may have been motivated by a desire both to save face and to reserve a legal right that might again be fully implemented under more favorable circumstances.

Significance of U.S.-Yugoslav Dispute for Subsequent Air-Defense Policy and Handling of Air Incidents

It may be assumed that the firm attitude and legal position taken by the United States in the Yugoslav dispute were closely studied by Soviet leaders. The Soviets may have seen in this controversy an indication of what they might have to reckon with in the event of similar incidents resulting from Soviet action in the future.

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64 This is essentially the interpretation made by Lissitzyn, op. cit., p. 573.

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There is, of course, little opportunity for ascertaining directly the impression that the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute made upon Soviet leaders. We may, however, note the differences between the Yugoslav handling of the August, 1946, incidents and the Soviet handling of the first comparable incident in which its own air-defense forces were engaged. This was the incident of April 3, 1950, in which a U.S. Navy Privateer was shot down by Soviet fighters over the Baltic Sea. It was the first postwar incident of its kind involving American and Russian planes, and was significant in that it marked the start of a severe Soviet air-defense policy that lasted at least until 1953. The differences between this and the Yugoslav incidents are significant and noteworthy in themselves; in addition, they might support inferences about the "lessons" that Soviet leaders may have drawn from the earlier Yugoslav experience.

1. Soviet leaders might very well have concluded that any hostile action on their part against an "intruding" U.S. plane would have to be more carefully arranged than was the Yugoslav action in order to minimize the possibility of a strong U.S. reaction. The Yugoslavs had attempted to justify their action on the ground, among others, that American and British planes had for some time engaged in flagrant overflights of Yugoslav territory for purposes of reconnaissance and military demonstration. But the planes that the Yugoslav forces shot down were evidently neither combat nor reconnaissance planes;

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they were unarmed passenger transports that were guilty only of unintentional overflights of a minor character.[65] Thus, the Yugoslav air-defense policy, which might have been politically acceptable if implemented against reconnaissance or combat aircraft, aroused sharp political objections when it was applied against unarmed passenger planes.

It is perhaps not fortuitous, therefore, that the first plane shot down by Soviet air-defense forces, on April 8, 1950, was one that could be plausibly represented as having been on a covert reconnaissance mission. We may conjecture that the Soviets purposely waited for such an occasion to introduce their new, severe air-defense policy. They may well have reasoned that, if the plane shot down either had been, or could plausibly have been alleged to have been, on a classified reconnaissance mission, United States leaders would not have wanted, or would not have been able, to react as they had in August, 1946, when they had publicly threatened to cite Yugoslavia before the United Nations Security Council. The silence which the Soviet government preserved for three days after the incident of April 8 might be construed as a tacit invitation to the United States to avoid making a public issue of the incident if it so wished.

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65 While the mission of these planes has not been authenticated in this study, it is not without significance that the Yugoslavs, though they had had access to both planes and to the personnel of one plane, did not accuse either American plane of having been on an illegal mission.

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2. In later disclosing the incident, the Soviets described their action against the U.S. plane in terms that served to meet and undercut the position in international law which the United States had taken in the Yugoslav case. Thereby, the Soviets further minimized the possibility that they would be confronted by strong U.S. pressure.

In reflecting upon the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute of August, 1946, Soviet leaders would have noted that the American position imposed important limitations upon the freedom of action of the territorial sovereign whose air space was being violated. Hostile action against a plane making an unintentional overflight was justified, according to the logic of that position, only if the intruding plane first committed a hostile act; and refusal to heed signals to land was not necessarily a hostile act, whereas firing upon the intercepting aircraft or other targets of the foreign country clearly was.

In justifying hostile fire upon the two U.S. planes in August, 1946, the Yugoslav government did not claim that these planes had fired first. But the Soviet government did make just that claim in justifying its hostile actions on April 8 and in subsequent cases; it made that claim even when it had to fabricate the facts to do so. According to the Soviet account of the April 8 incident, the U.S. plane not only did not land as requested, but "it opened fire" on the Soviet fighters, who

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were compelled to return the fire.[66] In inventing the story that the unarmed Navy plane opened fire, the Soviets implicitly conceded -- or at least avoided contradicting -- the United States claim that hostile counteraction against an unintentional overflight by a plane belonging to a friendly power is not justified unless the plane first commits an openly hostile act.

3. Soviet leaders may also have gained an impression from the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute of the limits beyond which likely U.S. reaction to the shooting down of one of its planes would not go. They may have noted that, while the United States made a strong diplomatic protest to the Yugoslav government, its military reaction was limited in scope. Although there was talk, at the time, of providing fighter-plane protection for U.S. transport planes that had to pass near the Yugoslav border, such a step was not taken.[67]

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66 Perhaps to lend plausibility to its account, the Soviet government stated, and persisted in contending, that the U.S. plane making the alleged overflight was a B-29, i.e., an armed military plane, whereas in fact the plane in question was an unarmed Navy Privateer.

67 The New York Times, August 21 and 23, 1946. The Forrestal Diaries indicate that on August 21 Acting Secretary of State Acheson called the Joint Chiefs of Staff to discuss ways and means for providing fighter escorts to American planes on the Austrian-Italian route near Yugoslavia. Forrestal noted that this "brought up the whole question of what we had with which to back up the very strong protest note we were sending to the Tito Government in Yugoslavia." On August 23, Forrestal had a talk with Acheson in which he expressed similar apprehension "about our capabilities to meet any sudden emergency in Europe." (Walter Millis [ed.], The Forrestal Diaries, The Viking Press, New York, 1951, pp. 195-196.)

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It is true that a U.S. naval task force happened to be in the Mediterranean at the time of the Yugoslav incidents and that this may have served the purpose of a military demonstration to some extent. And it is true, further, that U.S. flights on the Vienna-Udine route, which had been canceled on August 20, were ordered resumed, on August 25, with armed B-17 (Flying Fortress) bombers.

But according to the U.S. note of September 3, the use of armed planes on the Vienna-Udine route did not connote a forceful military attitude. U.S. orders provided that if, upon reaching Klagenfurt, Austria, the B-17's encountered bad weather that created the possibility of an unintentional overflight of Yugoslavia, they were not to proceed to Udine, but were to return to Vienna.

Thus, Soviet leaders could have noted that, when American planes were shot down, the United States did not precipitously resort to military reprisals, and did not utilize or threaten military sanctions in order to humiliate the Yugoslavs or to force them to retreat. They probably noted that the 48-hour U.S. ultimatum was backed only by a threat to cite the Yugoslav government before the United Nations Security Council. Such a threat, while probably not viewed with equanimity by communist leaders, would not be considered by them to be as serious as a threat of military counteraction.

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What is more, the Soviets would interpret such American restraint as motivated not by principles or morality but solely by considerations of political expediency. They probably found, in the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute, confirmation for their general belief that important steps in United States foreign policy, such as the use or threat of military force against opponents, are not taken impulsively but are part of a carefully prepared and soberly deliberated overall strategic policy. And they probably would have felt confirmed also in their deep-seated belief that U.S. leaders are hard-boiled power politicians who do not permit themselves to yield to provocation, i.e., who do not permit their international policies and behavior to be determined by such minor provocations as the occasional shooting down of a plane.

In sum, from their analysis of the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute, Soviet leaders might well have drawn two important conclusions: (1) U.S. reactions to future incidents of this type could be assigned predictable limits; and, therefore (2) similar Soviet actions against American planes would entail limited risks so long as the Politburo correctly read U.S. overall strategic intentions. Moreover, the Soviets may have reasoned, if the United States did not take strong military steps against Yugoslavia, it would be even less likely to do so against a major opponent such as the U.S.S.R.

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4. Finally, and this is the most speculative possibility of all, it is possible that, after the incidents of August, 1946, American planes went out of their way to avoid overflying Yugoslavia. If this is so, and if the Yugoslavs should have mentioned this to Moscow, it is possible that the Soviet Union felt further emboldened to shoot down American planes by what they might have construed as an indication that the United States tended to adopt a more cautious position on overflight following hostile interception of its planes. This hypothesis is purely speculative, since we have no information whatever on American reconnaissance overflights of Yugoslavia or on Yugoslav communications to Moscow on the subject.

Yugoslavs Charge that U.S. Overflights Have Reconnaissance and Demonstration Purposes

The two incidents of August 9 and 19, 1946, were preceded and followed by Yugoslav charges that large-scale and systematic overflights of Yugoslav territory were being made by American planes. On several occasions the Yugoslav government charged that these flights were being made for purposes of reconnaissance and demonstration. According to press accounts, the Yugoslav government was seriously concerned over aerial reconnaissance that was said to be taking place over the "Morgan Line," which divided the Allied and Yugoslav zones in the disputed Trieste (Venezia Giulia) area. So far as is known, official U.S. notes

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to Yugoslavia during the dispute never explicitly discussed the reconnaissance charge. Rather, the Americans refuted this allegation indirectly by citing data on the limited number of flights in that area by U.S. planes. It is difficult to evaluate the motives behind the Yugoslav allegations.

In its note of August 10, 1946, to the United States, the Yugoslav government charged that unauthorized overflights of Yugoslavia by Allied planes, "mostly American," had begun in February, 1946. Earlier, in the course of a foreign-policy speech to the Yugoslav Parliament on April 1, 1946, Tito had charged that Allied planes had been flying over Yugoslav territory. He also stated that Great Britain had not yet answered an official protest against such flights by British planes.[68] The British Foreign Office replied, on the fdlowing day, that bad weather had forced British planes off course.[69]

The Yugoslav Ministry of National Defense evidently took up the problem of unauthorized overflights with U.S. military and air-force attachés on several occasions. On July 10, 1946, the Yugoslav chief of the General Staff sent a personal latter to the U.S. military attaché warning him of the seriousness of these cases.[70] According to the Yugoslav source, the American military and air-force attachés replied, on July 16 and August 7, to the effect that they had received no replies on this

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68 The New York Times, April 2, 1946.

69 Ibid., April 3, 1946.

70 Vladimir Dedijer, Tito, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1953, pp. 251, 253. This information has not been checked against official U.S. accounts.

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matter from competent American military authorities in Italy and Austria. In the August 7 reply, the U.S. military attaché was said to have noted that a recent order issued by the United States government prohibited American fliers from flying over the territory of friendly countries without permission.[71]

It is perhaps not without significance that the first air incident occurred two days after the reply of the U.S. military attaché of August 7. It is possible that hostile air-defense measures were ordered by the Yugoslav government following its failure to get what it considered a satisfactory diplomatic reply to its protests.[72] Another possibility is that with the assurance, on August 7, that the U.S. government had forbidden overflights of friendly countries, it now appeared politically feasible to Yugoslav authorities henceforth to shoot down U.S. planes caught in air violations.

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71 Ibid. See also Yugoslav note of August 10, 1946: "Since February 9 this year Allied planes, mostly American, have been flying independently in violation of Yugoslav territory despite repeated warnings and notes to the military attaché in the American Embassy as well as in a speech by Marshal Tito to the Yugoslav Parliament in April. The [U.S.] military attaché reported that he had delivered the note to the proper authorities and informed the Yugoslav Government that Washington had issued an order forbidding American planes to fly over the territory of friendly nations." (Quoted in The New York Times, August 12, 1946.)

72 Such an attitude was conveyed -- though possibly for propaganda purposes -- by Tito in a speech on August 21, just after the second air incident. Tito stated that the Yugoslav government had protested "on numerous occasions" recently against such air violations but had always received the reply: "'give us the numbers of the planes.'" "How," he asked, "could we see the markings on planes which fly at up to 6,000 feet?" (The New York Times, August 21, 1946.)

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In a speech on August 21, Tito implicitly defended the Yugoslav action against the two U.S. planes. Recalling his earlier statement, of April 1, to the Yugoslav Parliament on the matter of Allied overflights, Tito charged that the violations had continued despite his protests:

> ...I would like to draw your attention to this matter as I wish to prove who in fact wants peace and who does not care about it; I wish to prove who is making provocations and who wishes to deny us our rights. On that particular occasion I raised the matter of the systematic violation of our frontiers and our territories over which daily fly not single but tens of planes. However, such violations... did not stop after I raised the matter....73

The inability of the Yugoslav government to secure a cessation of the overflights by diplomatic means was explicitly stated by Kardelj, Yugoslav Vice-Premier, to be the reason for resort to military action. Following the August air incidents, Kardelj was interviewed by the press in Paris, where he was attending the Peace Conference. He charged that, since an earlier Yugoslav protest against Allied overflights, 126 violations, mostly by American aircraft, had taken place, and that such violations were continuing. Kardelj added: "There was nothing left but to shoot them down."74

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73 The New York Times, August 22, 1946.

74 Ibid., August 22, 1946. A similar attitude on the part of the Yugoslav government was reported from Belgrade by the New York Times correspondent. According to this account, Yugoslav authorities had felt insulted by what they depicted as the U.S. failure to answer earlier Yugoslav protests. "They claim they were thus forced to take 'energetic action.'" According to the Yugoslavs, the British had immediately answered the first Yugoslav protest by informing the Yugoslavs of an order prohibiting

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In his written statement to U.S. newsmen of August 22, Tito publicly charged -- apparently for the first time -- that overflights of Yugoslav territory were being staged by the United States for purposes of demonstration and intimidation, "to create the impression among the Yugoslavs that the forces of the United States are so overwhelming that the Yugoslav Government must take everything." Whole U.S. squadrons, he said, had been flying over Yugoslav territory.[75]

Unexpected support for Yugoslav charges appeared in statements made by crew members of the first U.S. C-47 shot down on August 9. Interviewed by Allied correspondents following their release by the Yugoslavs, these crew members were reported to have stated that they knew of "frequent flights of both American and British airplanes over Yugoslav territory recently" which numbered as many as twenty a day.[76]

An unofficial explanation of Yugoslav air-defense actions was given to the press by Yugoslav sources at the Paris Peace Conference, which was then in session. According to these sources, the Yugoslav government had long been aroused by the continued disregard of regulations forbidding unauthorized

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74 (Cont'd)
such flights, and there had been no trouble with them subsequently. In contrast, while the Americans said they issued a similar order, it was -- according to the Yugoslavs -- never carried out. (The New York Times, August 25, 1946.)

75 Ibid., August 23, 1946. Substantially the same charge was repeated and elaborated by Tito in a fuller reply to the U.S. correspondents several days later. (Ibid., August 25, 1946.)

76 Ibid., August 23, 1946.

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flights. Yugoslavia, these sources claimed, had the same right to regulate air traffic over her borders as had other countries, notably the U.S.S.R., which had done just that since the war.[77]

In a more complete reply to the written questions of two U.S. correspondents, Tito, on August 24, was reported to have brought "the real issue regarding United States planes flying over Yugoslav territory into the open for the first time...." Tito charged that "these flights over our territory, not only on the part of fighter planes but also military transport planes, aim at reconnoitering those regions in which our military units occupying Zone B and the rest of the frontier /Venezia Giulia area/ are situated."[78] The Times correspondent added that the obvious implication in all Yugoslav complaints against overflights was that they were protesting not merely because of infringement of their international rights, but also, since the only part of Yugoslavia mentioned in the protest notes was the northwest corner of the country, because military security was involved.[79]

When receiving the U.S. ultimatum from U.S. Ambassador Patterson on August 22, Tito referred explicitly to the matter of overflights of the Morgan Line by Allied planes. According to Ambassador Patterson's cabled account of the meeting, Tito "refuted the /State/ Department's figures of authorized flights

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77 The New York Times, August 23, 1946.
78 Ibid., August 25, 1946.
79 Ibid.

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as not including frequent unscheduled excursions of military aircraft from Allied fields near Morgan Line. He said such flights numbered in thousands and were deliberate flouting of Yugoslav sovereignty and attempt to impress Yugoslavs with Allied strength."[80]

The most detailed refutation of Yugoslav charges of air violations was contained in the U.S. note of September 3.[81] The United States noted that in each of the time periods mentioned by the Yugoslav government the total number of flights by American planes which passed close enough to Yugoslav territory to have possibly committed inadvertent overflights was appreciably below the number of violations alleged. From this, the United States did not explicitly infer that Yugoslav charges were contrived, but it concluded that the violations set forth in the official Yugoslav notes must have been made by planes other than those of the United States.

The United States stated that the facts adduced in its note were based on a thorough and comprehensive investigation: The records of various U.S. military headquarters in Europe had been consulted in order to verify the whereabouts of every American plane on the dates in question. Therefore, the U.S. note implicitly answered Tito's charge that a large number of the overflights in question were taking place over the Morgan

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80 Text of Patterson's report on the visit to Tito, dated August 22, 9:00 p.m.; The New York Times, August 25, 1946.

81 The Yugoslavs charged 278 violations from July 16 to August 29, 1946, as follows: 172 in the period July 16 to August 8; 44 in the period August 10 to 20; 62 in the period August 20 to 30.

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Line in Venezia Giulia (Trieste). The U.S. note, however, did not explicitly take up the charge of aerial reconnaissance, perhaps because this charge had not been conveyed in any of the official Yugoslav diplomatic notes to the United States.

On August 25, the Yugoslav Ministry of Information charged that 110 violations of Yugoslav territory had been committed by "Anglo-American military planes" (of which 91 were war planes, and the remainder transports or unidentified planes) between August 10 and August 20. This oblique reference to Allied excursions over the Morgan Line was promptly challenged by General Morgan, Supreme Allied Mediterranean Commander, who described the Yugoslav charges as "irresponsible or malicious," and pointed out that the most stringent precautions had been taken to prevent such occurrences.[82]

Following the U.S. reply of September 3, 1946, there were, apparently, no further public Yugoslav charges of U.S. air violations for several years. In April, 1948, the Yugoslav government, in a note to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which was circulated also to members of the Security Council, alleged "steadily increasing violations of the Yugoslav air-space by American airplanes." The Yugoslav note listed twenty-one such violations in the period from January 1 to March 31, 1948, and stated that it had vainly protested to the U.S. government.[83]

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82 The New York Times, August 26, 1946.
83 United Nations, Press Release M/421, April 20, 1948.

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At this time the Yugoslav government did not threaten action against further intrusions, and if any of the alleged violations did occur, no military counteraction appears to have been taken.

In fact, the only air incident involving U.S. planes over Yugoslavia known to have occurred after Tito's pledge in August, 1946, was the forcing down in November, 1951, of a U.S. military plane which strayed outside the area in which it was authorized to search for a missing U.S. plane.[84]

Yugoslav-Soviet Reaction to U.S. Ultimatum

We have noted that Tito quickly moved to meet U.S. demands during the short period after the American ultimatum of August 21, 1946, was disclosed in the United States but before it was formally presented to him in Yugoslavia. Evidently, Tito wished to avoid the damaging impression that his retreat was in response to the ultimatum. Treatment of the dispute in public Yugoslav sources also was designed to preserve Tito's prestige.

Initial domestic Yugoslav treatment contained no hint of any tension in the situation. Belgrade newspapers carried brief stories of developments in the diplomatic dispute over the two air incidents. None of them spoke of the American note of August 21 as being an ultimatum. The second air incident, on August 19, was first mentioned in the Yugoslav press only on the morning of August 23. The Yugoslav press version of the conference

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84 The New York Times, November 23, 1951.

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between Tito and U.S. Ambassador Patterson at Bled, at which the ultimatum was delivered, was also face-saving: "The result of this meeting gives hope that in the future such incidents will be abolished by joint action of both Governments."[85]

Later, to the domestic Yugoslav audience, the Belgrade radio stated that Tito had "rejected" the ultimatum. In English-language broadcasts, however, the term "declined" was used. The contents of the ultimatum were said to have become "irrelevant" with the release of the interned American fliers before receipt of the U.S. note.[86]

On the following day, August 24, the General Secretariat of the Cabinet of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia issued a statement that Tito had set aside the U.S. ultimatum as "inapplicable."[87]

Evidently, a similar position had been taken by Tito himself when U.S. Ambassador Patterson presented him, on August 22, with the note containing the ultimatum. Referring to this meeting later, when giving written confirmation of his earlier oral assurances to Patterson, Tito added: "I also confirm my statement made on that occasion...that I consider objectless the American Government's note which was, to our surprise, unnecessarily and without reason too strong toward an Allied country as is Yugoslavia."[88]

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85 Ibid., August 24, 1946.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., August 25, 1946.
88 Ibid., September 4, 1946.

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By August 25, despite initial Yugoslav efforts to conceal the diplomatic crisis, popular anxiety had evidently reached a point which made it incumbent upon Yugoslav authorities to deal openly with the issue. The Belgrade press now carried a strong denunciation of the Western powers for what it called a planned campaign to utilize the air incidents for purposes of discrediting Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference. The official Yugoslav communist organ, Borba, carried a four-column editorial, "Invented Campaign against Yugoslavia," which assailed the foreign press for describing the U.S. note as an ultimatum. "This campaign," Borba charged, "is aimed not only at Yugoslavia, but simultaneously it is an attempt to poison the international situation....This provocation has been brought about just at a time when Yugoslavia is trying to fight for a democratic peace and for her rights."[89]

On the same day, Moscow, which had similarly played down the emerging diplomatic crisis and had not as yet published the U.S. ultimatum note, openly denounced the ultimatum as "unprecedentedly impertinent pressure...by no means justified by the circumstances." Yakov Victorov in Pravda stated that the United States "took advantage of the fact that Yugoslav planes had forced an American plane to land and sent an unprecedentedly sharp note...demanding in ultimatum form the release within 48 hours of the interned passengers."[90]

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89 Ibid., August 26, 1946.
90 Ibid.

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Paralleling Yugoslav comment, the Pravda article charged that the strong U.S. reaction was not justified, and that the two air incidents were being utilized as a pretext to exert pressure upon Yugoslavia and to discredit her at the Paris Peace Conference. Similarly, the Pravda article attempted, as had the Yugoslavs themselves, to obscure the fact that Tito had been forced by the ultimatum to make concessions.

The Pravda article implicitly regarded the U.S. ultimatum as a provocation to which, by making appropriate concessions, Yugoslavia had not yielded. Thus, after noting that Yugoslavia had released the interned U.S. crew, the Pravda article concluded: "Thanks to the wisdom of the Government of Yugoslavia, the 'incident' was not aggravated."[91]

More generally, Pravda observed that the "abrupt and arrogant position taken by the United States in connection with the incident is proof that the tendencies for conducting a policy of force are winning over the American policy-makers."[92]

14. SOVIET PLANE IN FORCED LANDING IN U.S.-OCCUPIED SOUTH KOREA (August 25, 1946)

A two-seater Red Army liaison plane en route from Vladivostok to Dairen landed at Kimpo airfield outside of

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91 Earlier press reports from the Paris Peace Conference carried unsubstantiated rumors that Molotov had urged restraint upon the Yugoslavs in their conflict with the United States in a meeting on August 22 with Yugoslav Vice-Premier Kardelj (The New York Times, August 23 and 24, 1946). There is no reference to Moscow's attitude toward the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute in Dedijer's official biography of Tito (op. cit.).

92 The New York Times, August 26, 1946.

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Seoul on August 25 without incident. The Soviet pilot explained he had lost his course, which included Pyongyang, capital of the Soviet-occupied North Korean Zone, and had run dangerously low on gasoline when he sighted the field and landed.

Announcement of the forced landing was made by U.S. Army authorities in Seoul on August 26. After obtaining clearance, the Soviet plane resumed its flight on the following day.[93]

15. SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS OF SWEDISH TERRITORY (August, 1946, and November, 1947)

During the dispute with the U.S.S.R. over the shooting down of two Swedish planes in June, 1952, the Swedish government had occasion to recall earlier violations of Swedish territory by Soviet planes. The Soviet government contended that its planes never violated the frontiers of other states. The Swedish government promptly recalled, in its note of July 1, 1952, that the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs had on two previous occasions admitted overflights of the fortified (Swedish) area of Karlskrona.

Those two Soviet overflights had been protested by the Swedish government in notes dated August 28, 1946, and September 25, 1947. Soviet notes admitting the overflights were dated

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93 The New York Times, August 27 and 28, 1946.

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October 24, 1946, and November 14, 1947. The dates on which the overflights actually took place, however, were not disclosed. The Soviet government in its reply on July 16, 1952, recalled that, as had been conveyed to the Swedish government at the time, the Soviet overflights in question had been due to faulty navigation. No other details regarding the overflights were given by either the Swedish or the Soviet governments.[94]

The Swedish government's reference to the earlier Soviet air violations seems to have been a belated disclosure; we have no evidence that the Soviet overflights were publicized at the time.[95]

16. TURKISH PLANES REPORTED MISSING AFTER OVERFLIGHT OF SOVIET BORDER (September 9, 1946)

The Turkish newspaper Tasvir reported that two Turkish planes which overflew the eastern border adjoining Soviet Russia were missing. No further details were contained in the dispatch from Istanbul of September 9, 1946.[96]

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94 Attacks upon Two Swedish Aircraft over the Baltic in June 1952: Documents Published by the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, New Series II:2, Stockholm, 1952.

95 See also case study No. 66.

96 The New York Times, September 10, 1946.

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17. YUGOSLAV MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC ACTION AGAINST ALLEGED GREEK OVERFLIGHTS (September to December, 1946)

On September 6, 1946, it was reported that the Yugoslav government had charged a violation of its frontier on the preceding day by a Greek reconnaissance plane. According to the Yugoslav account, which alleged that similar violations had occurred in the past, the Greek plane was forced down by Yugoslav fighters. The Greek account held that the incident was of no importance; the plane in question was said to have been off course when it was hit and forced down by anti-aircraft fire. The Greek statement added that the Greek plane did not carry a camera.[97]

The incident touched off a diplomatic controversy in which both sides accused each other of new air violations. Major developments were reported as follows in the New York Times on the dates indicated:

September 7, 1946:

> Belgrade charged a provocation by Greek planes; it alleged that a Greek Spitfire which crashed in Yugoslav territory had fired its machine guns and that documents discovered in the wreckage showed that the flight had been planned for provocational purposes.

September 11, 1946:

> The Greek Government demanded the release of the pilot of the plane forced down on September 5.

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97. The New York Times, September 7, 1946.

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September 29, 1946:

The Yugoslav Government accepted a Greek proposal for a joint inquiry.

October 21, 1946:

The Greek plane and pilot were freed.

November 24, 1946:

The Yugoslav Government charged border violations by Greek planes and announced its intention to protest to the United Nations.

November 25, 1946:

The Greek Government charged the Yugoslavs with making overflights of Greece.

November 26, 1946:

The Greek Government denied the Yugoslav charges and was reported as ready to ask for a U.N. inquiry.

December 9, 1946:

The Greek Government was reported investigating a Yugoslav complaint of a new air incident.

18. BRITISH R.A.F. PLANE FORCED TO LAND BY YUGOSLAV MILITARY PLANE (October 5, 1946)

An R.A.F. courier plane en route from Bucharest to Beri, Italy, was forced by signals from a Yugoslav combat craft to land near Nish, Yugoslavia. The British overflight was not unauthorized; it had been cleared by Yugoslav air authorities.

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The R.A.F. plane was not shot down, and the character of the signal employed by the Yugoslav plane was not mentioned in the public report of the incident. Following the incident, all R.A.F. flights over Yugoslavia were canceled.[98]

On the following day it was announced that the R.A.F. plane had been freed after a protest by the British ambassador to Belgrade. It was also reported that the British regarded the incident as resulting from a misunderstanding and planned no diplomatic action.

Significance

The present incident occurred shortly after the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute over the shooting down of two U.S. transports over Yugoslavia in August, 1946.[99] That dispute had resulted in a Yugoslav assurance that U.S. planes making unauthorized flights would not be fired upon even if they did not follow instructions to land. The present incident involving the British plane cast no light on the question whether Tito's assurance to the United States also applied to British planes making unauthorized overflights of Yugoslavia. For, in this instance, the British plane observed the signal from the Yugoslav plane requesting it to land, and there is no indication that the Yugoslav plane resorted to fire.

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98 The New York Times, October 6, 1946.

99 See case study No. 13.

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19. SOVIET REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY RESTRICTION ON U.S. MILITARY AND CIVILIAN FLIGHTS OVER CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, AND RUMANIA (October, 1946)

On October 9, 1946, U.S. military authorities in Frankfurt, Germany, disclosed that they had placed a temporary ban on flights by U.S. military and civilian planes to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania. The disclosure was made by a public relations officer, who stated that no further details could be given.

Efforts made by the press to clarify the nature of the ban resulted in disclosure of additional information in the next few days. But the reasons for the temporary ban were not clarified. On October 10, U.S. authorities in Frankfurt indicated that Czechoslovakia and Hungary had been removed from the ban. Higher U.S. officers were reported to have been under the impression that the order in question was in response to a Russian request for a temporary ban on such flights. But U.S. Air Force Headquarters in Frankfurt, from which this statement originated, was reported by the press to have back-tracked later and to have insisted that an explanation could be obtained only in Washington. The Russian request, it was guessed, might be related to the possibility that the Soviets were planning either large-scale troop movements or demolitions in the areas in question. Information reportedly coming from the Pan American Airways office in Germany was said to have given October 9-14 as the period of the ban on such flights.

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From Washington, D.C., the Associated Press was able to report on October 10, 1946, that a similar ban, introduced apparently at the request of the Russians, had been in effect earlier in the year.

On the same day, London sources attributed the October ban to Russian military and air maneuvers. But, at the same time, British commercial aircraft companies indicated that they had received no orders to suspend flights traversing the same areas. This raised the possibility that the United States may have itself voluntarily initiated the ban on flights to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania.

On October 11, the U.S. Army was reported to have restored air traffic to Central Europe, though it remained silent on the reason for the temporary ban.[100]

20. BULGARIAN CHARGE OF OVERFLIGHTS BY UNKNOWN PLANES FROM GREECE (December 1, 1946)

In the New York Times of December 2, 1946, the Bulgarian government was reported to have charged that planes of unknown origin coming from Greece had overflown Bulgarian territory on seven occasions in five weeks.

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100 The New York Times, October 10, 11, and 12, 1946.

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21. U.S. PLANE IN EMERGENCY LANDING IN HUNGARY (December 1, 1946)

While on a training flight over Germany on December 1, 1946, a U.S. attack bomber (A-26) became lost and was forced to make an emergency landing 180 miles east of Budapest.

A public announcement by U.S. officials in Frankfurt, Germany, gave no indication that the A-26 had been intercepted by Soviet planes or had encountered any form of military counteraction while over Soviet-dominated territories. United States officials emphasized, on December 6, that the plane was not being held by the Russians but was undergoing routine clearance procedures. They were unable to explain the delay in clearing the plane.

There is no record of a Soviet or Hungarian protest of an air violation in this case.[101]

22. SOVIET PLANE IN FORCED LANDING IN GREECE (December, 1946)

A Soviet plane was reported to have made a forced landing on Greek territory (Sirirocastron). A Greek military investigation of the incident resulted in a finding that there was no cause for suspicion. Several days later, it was announced that the Soviet plane and its crew had been freed.[102]

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101 The New York Times, December 7, 1946.

102 Ibid., December 24 and 27, 1946.

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23. SOVIET PROTEST OF THREE ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS IN FAR EAST (August 3, October 28, October 29, 1947)

A Soviet note dated December 1, 1947, protested the following alleged violations of Soviet territory by U.S. planes:

(1) August 3, 1947: In the Sea of Chukotsk, 35 miles northeast of Cape Wellen, a U.S. plane violated Soviet territorial waters and circled a Soviet vessel.

(2) October 28, 1947: Three two-motored U.S. bombers overflew two Soviet islands (Akiura-Sima and Iuri-Sima) in the Lesser Kuriles chain.

(3) October 29, 1947: A single U.S. plane overflew Akiura-Sima in the Lesser Kuriles chain.

The Soviet note concluded by expressing the hope that the U.S. government would give necessary instructions to appropriate military authorities regarding the inadmissibility of future violations.

(USAF later told the State Department[103] that the only U.S. planes in the vicinity on October 28, 1947, had been two Piper Cubs on an around-the-world mission, and a B-17 which had accompanied them part of the way; no overflights were indicated on the flight log.)

Apparently neither side publicized the alleged air violations or the Soviet protest note. Nothing on the subject was found in the New York Times.

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103 Both the Soviet note and the USAF communication are available in the Department of State files; RESTRICTED.

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Significance

The unwillingness or inability to take any military counteraction against the alleged air intruders was evidently felt by Soviet leaders to make it necessary once again to resort to diplomatic communication in order to make known their opposition to such "encroachments." We are unable to account for the delay in the Soviet protest, or for its timing.

24. SOVIET PROTEST OF U.S. OVERFLIGHT OF BIG DIOMEDE ISLAND (BERING STRAITS) (December, 1947)

In a note on January 5, 1948, the Soviet government charged that a U.S. four-engined plane had made a two-mile penetration over Big Diomede Island on December 27, 1947. USAF later told the State Department that a U.S. plane on a search mission on December 25, 1947, had flown over Little Diomede Island (which is U.S. territory) but not over Big Diomede Island. This formed the substance of an official reply to the Soviet note, in which the U.S. government stated that it was convinced that no violation of Soviet frontiers had occurred.[104]

The tone of the January Soviet note was somewhat stronger than that used in earlier notes regarding alleged U.S. air violations in the Far East, but it contained no threats, either

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[104] The Soviet note, the USAF communication to the State Department, and the U.S. reply are available in the Department of State files; RESTRICTED.

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direct or implicit. The note concluded by observing that the Soviet Foreign Office "reiterates its protest and insists that the Government of the United States undertake urgent measures for the elimination of violations of Soviet frontiers in the future."

Apparently neither side publicized the alleged air violation, or the Soviet note. Nothing on the subject was found in the New York Times.

Significance

This case appears to illustrate, once again, a principle of Soviet behavior: if no action is taken against an "encroachment," then it must be protested verbally.

25. SOVIET EFFORT TO LIMIT ALLIED USE OF VIENNA AIR CORRIDOR[105] (April, 1948)

On April 7, 1948, Soviet authorities in Vienna were reported as persisting in their demand that U.S. authorities remove their aviation-range station from Soviet territory, five miles from Tulln airfield, which was being used by U.S. forces. The Soviet insistence followed a letter of protest, dated April 7, from Lt. General Geoffrey Keyes, U.S. Occupation Chief. The aviation-range station in question had been erected

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105 This case study is based on unclassified materials only; access to classified materials would be necessary for a fuller account of developments.

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a year before with the knowledge and co-operation of the Soviets. The removal of the station, General Keyes' letter pointed out, might lead to inadvertent violations, by U.S. aircraft, of the twelve-mile-wide air corridor into Vienna. It was the impression of U.S. observers that the Soviet demand might be the first in a series of attempts to isolate the Western occupation forces in Vienna, as had happened in Berlin.[106]

On April 16, it was reported that Colonel General L. V. Kurasov, Soviet commander in Vienna, had called on the British to "cease forthwith the violation of agreements by your use of Schwechat airport for civilian aviation." Kurasov's statement was made in reply to a protest by Lieutenant General Galloway, British commander, against a Russian denial of free and unimpeded access to the British airfield. A British spokesman said that the flights by British aircraft would continue, since the agreement signed by the Russians in July, 1945, had not specified the type of planes authorized to fly the corridor.[107]

Soviet pressure on the Allied position in Vienna at this time was also aimed at blocking the highway to the U.S. airport at Tulln. It was intimated to the press that Kurasov, in a forthcoming reply to a protest from General Keyes about a roadblock on the highway, would charge violation of air agreements.[108]

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106 The New York Times, April 8, 1948.
107 Ibid., April 17, 1948.
108 Ibid., Vienna dispatch dated April 16.

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However, on the following day, the Russians suddenly lifted the ground blockade of Tulln airport.[109]

Later in April, Soviet authorities in Vienna proposed a pact curbing use of airfields in the Vienna area. Following a quick rejection of the Soviet proposal by the Western powers, the plan was dropped by the Soviet authorities.[110]

26. AIR COLLISION OF BRITISH AND SOVIET PLANES OVER GATOW AIRFIELD, BERLIN[111] (April 5, 1948)

On April 5, 1948, a Russian fighter plane suddenly dove into a British passenger plane, as the latter was preparing to land at Gatow airport in the British sector of Berlin. Both planes crashed. The Russian pilot and all fourteen passengers of the British plane, including two Americans, were killed.

The Gatow incident occurred almost at the beginning of the crisis over the Berlin blockade. The Soviets were just beginning, by various pressure devices, to feel out the Western powers before instituting a full blockade. The Allied airlift to Berlin had not yet been organized. Diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue of responsibility for the Gatow air accident were unsuccessful. But the handling of the Gatow incident may

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109 The New York Times, April 18, 1947; Vienna dispatch dated April 17.

110 Ibid., April 27 and 30, May 1, 1948.

111 This account is based solely on newspaper sources.

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have had some importance in providing both sides with certain indications as to the measures and risks the other was likely to take in the developing Battle of Berlin.

Significance

From the reaction of the Western powers to the Gatow incident the Soviets may well have derived an indication of the Allies' determination to resist by force, if necessary, any direct Soviet effort to deny them the free use of the Berlin air corridors. According to this hypothesis, the Gatow incident could well have been indirectly responsible in part for the caution and restraint which the Soviets subsequently observed in attempting to interfere with the Western airlift into Berlin.

Immediately following the Gatow crash, General Robertson, British occupation chief, ordered fighter escorts for all British passenger planes. General Clay, the American commander, promptly followed suit. On the day of the incident, April 5, Robertson conferred with Marshal Sokolovsky, the Soviet occupation chief, and vigorously protested the incident. According to the account of the meeting appearing in the New York Times of April 6, 1948, Sokolovsky expressed deep regret, and assured Robertson that no interference with the passage of British planes through the agreed corridor was "or is" intended.

British Foreign Secretary Bevin later told Parliament that Sokolovsky had given Robertson oral assurances to this effect,

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and that the British were then waiting for the assurances to be put in writing.[112]

Upon receiving the Soviet commander's oral apology and assurance that the action of the Russian plane was not deliberately hostile, General Robertson canceled his order for fighter escorts.[113] A Times story from London on April 6 noted that the earlier decision to provide fighter escorts for British and American planes had proved that Britain and the United States were willing to risk war, or something approximating it, unless the Russians ceased their provocation. It was reported that the British Foreign Office had taken a "very serious view" of the Gatow incident, but that tension had been eased by Marshal Sokolovsky's assurances to General Robertson.

Robertson followed up his oral and written protest of April 5 with another letter to Sokolovsky, on April 6, which outlined specific guarantees sought for British planes flying the corridor.[114] Several days later, the texts of both of General Robertson's letters were released.[115] In them, Robertson charged that the usual routine warning that a Soviet plane was in the air had not been given in the case of the fighter plane which crashed into the British plane. Robertson demanded from Sokolovsky an "assurance that you condemn as

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112 The New York Times, April 7, 1948.
113 Ibid., April 6, 1948.
114 Ibid., April 7, 1948.
115 Ibid., April 10, 1948.

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strongly as I do the fact that this fighter aircraft was in the air without prior notification and that it was flown in a manner to cause this catastrophe."[116] Robertson also requested "positive assurance" that British aircraft would be "immune from molestation" and announced his intention to send up fighter craft as protection until such assurance had been received.[117]

On April 7, however, Sokolovsky reversed his position on the incident and put out a version of the "facts" which laid responsibility for the accident on the British plane. In his reply to Robertson (published in Tägliche Rundschau on April 8 and reported in the New York Times on the same day), Sokolovsky charged that British efforts to present the Gatow accident as the result of a planned action by the Soviet pilot were a defamation which apparently had provocative aims. Sokolovsky claimed that the accident was due to the British plane's action in coming out of the clouds over Dallgow, a nearby Soviet airfield, and crashing into the tail of the Soviet fighter as it was landing. The British plane had "violated" regulations laid down by the Allied Control Authorities in that the Soviets had not been informed of its departure.

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116 The New York Times, April 10, 1948.
117 Ibid.

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Sokolovsky's note ended with an implicit threat: "I hope you will issue the necessary orders to British planes for the strict following out of air-safety directives outlined by the Allied Control Council. This will forestall me from the necessity of taking measures for the protection and security of traffic over the Soviet occupation zone of Germany...."

In London it was believed that Sokolovsky had been reproached by Moscow for his earlier apology, and forced to write the letter of April 7 placing blame for the incident on the British.[118]

Confronted by the new Soviet countercharge, British authorities changed their own position. In a new letter to Sokolovsky, Robertson dropped a demand for a quadripartite investigation that he had made in his letter of April 6.[119]

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118 The New York Times, April 9, 1948.

119 In his letter of April 7, Sokolovsky had indicated willingness to participate in a joint Soviet-British commission to investigate the circumstances of the accident, but had objected to a quadripartite investigation on the ground that delays would ensue. Subsequently, the effort to conduct a joint British-Soviet investigation into the accident quickly broke down as a result of Soviet objections to hearing testimony from German and American eyewitnesses. The British went ahead with the inquiry on their own. Later, when the British had concluded the inquiry and were about to issue a report, the Soviets made a last-minute effort to re-establish the joint commission. In a letter to the British, the Soviets withdrew their initial objection, agreeing to hear all witnesses, regardless of nationality. The Soviet effort was unsuccessful, however; the British commission issued its report shortly after receipt of the Soviet letter, possibly before it was opened and read. The British report blamed the Soviet plane for the crash. Subsequently, a Soviet investigation report was published which accused the British of falsifying their report. Both sides filed diplomatic claims for compensation. (The New York Times, April 14, 17, 18, 20, 23; May 2, 21, 1948.)

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Robertson also dropped his earlier demand for written assurances of the safety of Western planes, and he assured the Soviet commander that British planes had been strictly instructed to observe the quadripartite flight safety rules.[120]

A possible reason for the British retreat was suggested by the press. A technical violation of flight rules had possibly been committed in the case of the ill-fated flight of the British passenger plane. Although the British plane was on a regularly scheduled flight, a specific report on its departure and arrival times had not, as required, been transmitted to Soviet authorities.[121]

It was agreed by British, French, and United States officials in Berlin that the Russians had gained a definite tactical victory in this second battle of the "war of face." Closer Russian policing of the Western Allies' air corridor to Berlin was now expected.[122]

Of some interest, too, in terms of the ensuing Berlin blockade and airlift is the fact that, in contesting responsibility for the Gatow crash, both sides invoked the Allied Control Authority (ACA) air safety rules. Therefore, the authority and continuing applicability of the ACA air agreements were, if anything, strengthened by the Gatow incident. This incidental result was perhaps of some value to the Western Allies, for their airlift, destined to be inaugurated several months later, was justified by them under ACA air regulations.

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120 The New York Times, April 10, 1948.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.

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27. BERLIN AIRLIFT[123] (1948-1949)

The Western powers reacted to the Soviet blockade of Berlin in mid-1948 with an airlift which was initially on a modest scale but assumed increasingly larger proportions. Planes participating in the airlift all passed through the narrow air corridors governing air traffic between West Germany and Berlin.

Technical violations of the corridor by Allied planes were undoubtedly numerous. But it is noteworthy that, apart from filing complaints through channels, the Soviet forces did not use these violations as a pretext for creating serious incidents. On several occasions, Soviet authorities in Berlin formally notified Western officials that any Western aircraft caught outside the air corridor would be compelled to land. No effort to implement this threat was evidently made.[124]

Harassment of planes engaged in the airlift was fairly frequent, but generally it took limited forms. On numerous occasions, Soviet sources publicly announced forthcoming air maneuvers or gunnery practice which, had they been carried out, would have jeopardized the safety of planes engaged in the airlift. But actual Soviet activity was rarely of a scope or nature in keeping with the terms of the warnings, and did not constitute a serious hazard.

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123 The following account is based on unclassified sources.

124 The New York Times, July 8, 1948; Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin), November 11, 1948. This behavior was in sharp contrast to later Soviet practice, beginning with the Air France case of April 29, 1952 (case study No. 57), of forcing down by hostile fire all Western planes alleged to have been violating the Berlin corridor.

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Soviet efforts at harassment were, more often than not, more noteworthy for the scrupulous care taken by the Soviets to avoid manufacturing fatal incidents. Similarly, with regard to Soviet antiaircraft fire along the air corridor, a high United States official was able to note: "Don't take this too seriously since it has been happening for the last three years. Now it has added importance because the air corridors are a vital need." The same official noted that on one occasion Soviet flak had occurred "at a comfortable distance" from the air corridor.[125] In mid-September, Lt. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, USAF commander in Europe, gave a reassuring picture of the threat to the airlift: "A lot of Russian flak, Yaks, balloons and blinding searchlights have been reported -- but they have not bothered our pilots."[126]

In addition to contributing to the Soviet "war of nerves," the practice of giving public notice and "warning" of forthcoming Soviet maneuvers may also have been intended to minimize the possibility of accidents and to avoid blame if they did occur.

On numerous occasions, Soviet officials tried to limit the effectiveness of the airlift by proposing changes in existing air-traffic regulations which would have limited the West's use of the air corridors. For example, the Soviets proposed that night-flying and all flights by U.S. commercial airlines be prohibited, and that instrument-flying be

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125 The New York Times, August 12, 1948.

126 Ibid., September 13, 1948.

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restricted;[127] that passenger lists and 24-hour notice be given for each flight;[128] that specific information on each flight be given "not later than an hour before the take-off."[129] Following Allied diplomatic conversations with Stalin in Moscow during the summer of 1948, technical discussions were held by the four occupying powers in Berlin. At these discussions, General Sokolovsky proposed new restrictions on existing air traffic, endeavoring to limit Western flights to Berlin strictly to those necessary to meet the needs of the Western occupation forces. He also demanded that the transport of commercial freight and passengers via the air corridors be placed under the control of the Soviet command. Western representatives rejected all these demands.[130]

The limits observed by the Soviets were also evidenced by their prompt release of Western fliers participating in the airlift who made emergency landings in Eastern Germany.[131]

Significance

The Soviets clearly attached great importance to their reaction to the Berlin blockade as a means of reaching certain

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127 The New York Times, April 11, 1948; also Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin), September 28, 1948.

128 The New York Times, April 24, 1948.

129 Ibid., September 11, 1948.

130 The Berlin Crisis: A Report on the Moscow Discussions, 1948, Department of State, Publication 3298, "European and British Commonwealth Series" I, September, 1948, pp. 42-43, 46.

131 The New York Times, August 23, 1948, and September 15, 1948.

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political objectives. While they exerted considerable pressure on the Allied position in Berlin, and accepted certain risks in the process, the underlying prudence and caution of their tactics is revealed by the fact that they did not go beyond administrative devices in attempting to ease the Western Allies out of Berlin. The unwillingness of the Soviets to use methods which might unduly increase political risks is seen also in their limited attempts to interfere directly with planes engaged in the airlift; it is generally agreed that they could have disrupted the airlift quite effectively had they interfered with radio-controlled landings on which the airlift was dependent, especially during the fog-bound winter months. They also made no effort to force down Western planes allegedly violating East German territory outside of the air corridor. Evidently, therefore, the Soviets denied themselves certain methods of interfering with the airlift because they did not wish to force the Western Allies to resort to extreme measures to maintain themselves in Berlin.

The Berlin airlift experience would seem to illustrate a general rule of behavior which has been regarded as part of the Politburo's "operational code"; namely, in deciding whether to take an action against an opponent, the Politburo must be careful not to grasp promising opportunities for immediate success if it thereby sets into motion a chain of events which it cannot control and which may ultimately have serious unfavorable consequences.[132]

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[132] See RAND Report R-239, A Study of Bolshevism (UNCLASSIFIED), May 1, 1953, p. 49.

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28. SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS OF DANISH ISLAND OF BORNHOLM (September 9, 1948)

According to a press dispatch from Copenhagen on September 9, 1948, observers on the Danish isle of Bornholm reported repeated violations of Danish sovereignty by Soviet military planes on that day. Scores of Soviet bombers and fighters were said to have flown over Bornholm all morning. Russian warships were also observed in the area. The dispatch further reported that no diplomatic steps had yet been taken. The Danish foreign minister was in Stockholm attending a conference at which mutual Nordic defense was being discussed.[133]

Danish reports of such overflights were ridiculed and refuted by Soviet radio broadcasts as "mischief-making rumors."[134]

The occurrence of the overflights in conjunction with Russian naval maneuvers in the immediate vicinity was interpreted as a possible "demonstration" designed to convey Soviet displeasure over the meeting then being held by the Scandinavian foreign ministers in Stockholm for the purpose of discussing military defense policies.[135]

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133 The New York Times, September 10, 1948.

134 FBIS, Survey of Moscow Broadcasts, September 16-22, 1948; CONFIDENTIAL.

135 USAF Air Intelligence Digest, October, 1948; SECRET.

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29. U.S. OVERFLIGHT OF AMSTETTIN IN SOVIET ZONE OF AUSTRIA (November, 1948)

U.S. Air Force authorities at first denied and then, after an investigation, conceded the possibility that their planes may have overflown Amstettin, in the Soviet zone of Austria, as charged by the Soviets. A Soviet protest of the incident was made to the U.S. Command in Austria, and was later publicized.

Soviet forces evidently made no effort of military counteraction against the six U.S. planes involved in the overflight. The incident was disclosed by Moscow in a TASS dispatch, which charged U.S. fighter planes with having made "provocative" flights and mock attacks over the town of Amstettin.[136]

U.S. Air Force headquarters in Wiesbaden quickly denied that any U.S. planes had flown anywhere near Amstettin, but U.S. officials in Vienna were said to be awaiting a more detailed report.[137]

A few days later it was reported in the press that USAF headquarters in Wiesbaden had sent an embarrassed retraction to U.S. headquarters in Vienna:

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136 FBIS, Survey of Soviet Broadcasts, November 26, 1948; CONFIDENTIAL. The exact date of the incident is not available; the TASS dispatch appeared in Izvestiia on November 18.

137 The New York Times, November 19, 1948.

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According to a spokesman for the U.S. Command in Austria, the Command in Wiesbaden now reports six such planes were operating at the time in the vicinity of Linz and Ems, only a few miles from Amstettin. The American commands in Germany and Austria agree, however, that the TASS report that the pilots practiced dive-bombing over the Russian-occupied town was an obvious propaganda invention. It is assumed here that the pilots had strayed off their course in the bad weather that prevailed.[138]

Significance

The case is another illustration of the Soviets' tendency to resort to diplomatic protest when they have not taken any military countermeasure against an "encroachment."

Available materials do not permit us to check the possibility that the incident was publicized by the Soviets only after they received an initial disclaimer of responsibility from U.S. authorities in Austria.

30. SOVIET PROTESTS AGAINST U.S. AIR SURVEILLANCE OF SOVIET SHIPPING IN SEA OF JAPAN AND FAR EAST WATERS (1948-1949)

During 1948-1949, the Soviet government addressed a series of protests to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow against alleged "violations of freedom of commercial navigation" by United States planes in Far East waters and in the Sea of Japan. The

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138 The New York Times, November 23, 1948; Vienna dispatch dated November 22, 1948.

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Soviets also charged that the U.S. planes in question "buzzed" Soviet vessels and thereby endangered their safety. The exchange of notes in this series was as follows:[139]

Soviet Note	U.S. Reply
January 30, 1948	Unanswered
March 4, 1948	Unanswered
April 8, 1948	May 25, 1948
July 8, 1948	Unanswered
February 16, 1949	Apparently unanswered

The Soviet notes listed specific instances of "interference" and "buzzing."

The first note (January 30, 1948) ended with a polite statement of expectation that the U.S. government would give necessary instructions to appropriate military authorities regarding the inadmissibility of such violations in the future. The second note (March 4, 1948), observing that the first protest had gone unanswered and that "interference" with Soviet shipping continued, concluded with a somewhat stronger diplomatic stereotype: the Soviet Foreign Office "insists that immediate measures be taken for the elimination of such violations." After the third Soviet note (April 8, 1948), which noted that the two previous protests had gone unanswered,

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139 Copies of the notes are available in Department of State files; RESTRICTED. The records examined for this study appear to indicate that the February 16, 1949, note was the last in the series; the possibility exists, however, that other notes were exchanged which have not come to our attention.

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an article appeared in Izvestiia (April 11, 1948) entitled "Irresponsibility or System?," which contained the following statement:

> If, however, as facts suggest, this observation /of Soviet shipping by U.S. planes/ is becoming systematic, it is doubtful whether such a system will contribute to consolidating normal relations between states.

The U.S. reply of May 25, 1948, rejected the Soviet protests and asserted that surveillance of shipping around Japan was necessary and did not constitute hindrance to commercial navigation. The Soviet note of July 8, 1948, refuted arguments advanced in the U.S. note and insisted upon an "immediate cessation" of such practices without implying, however, that any Soviet counteraction would be taken.

The Soviet note of February 16, 1949, called attention to previous Soviet notes, listed new instances of alleged "violations," and noted that the U.S. government had not replied to the last Soviet note on the subject.

All Soviet notes were given publicity in Soviet media.

Significance

U.S. air surveillance of shipping around Japan was protested by the Soviets possibly by way of diplomatic retaliation for SCAP complaints of, and action against, Soviet air violations of rules governing flights in and out of Japan.[140]

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[140] See case study No. 5.

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If this explanation is correct, this instance would be another example of the generally observed communist tendency to match every accusation with a similar counteraccusation.

31. SOVIET ALLEGATION OF FINNISH-U.S. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF SOVIET BORDER[141] (March, 1949)

In a commentary by Demidov, in a late February, 1949, issue of Red Star a news story of a wolf-hunt along the Finnish-Soviet frontier was dismissed as an attempt to conceal reconnaissance activities. Under the guise of hunting wolves and with the aid of radio, aircraft, and aerial photography, Demidov charged, "a large-scale military expedition" had been organized in the Soviet frontier area. It was claimed, further, that representatives of the Supreme Command of the Finnish Army had participated, and, also, that Anglo-American observers took part in the expedition. An American correspondent was named as having taken many photographs with him when leaving Finland.

32. CHINESE COMMUNIST CHARGES OF FRENCH AIR VIOLATIONS OF INDOCHINA BORDER (December, 1949, to October, 1950)

In November, 1950, the Chinese communist government publicly disclosed its diplomatic protest of alleged French air and ground

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[141] FBIS, Weekly Survey of Moscow Broadcasts, March 24-30, 1949; CONFIDENTIAL.

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violations of Chinese territory in the southern border provinces of Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwantung.

The catalog of incidents listed by the Chinese communists included 22 alleged air violations of Kwangsi from December 14, 1949, to August 31, 1950; 18 alleged air violations of Kwangsi in September-October, 1950; 30 alleged air violations of Yunnan in September-October, 1950; and 2 alleged air violations of Kwantung in September-October, 1950. A number of casualties were said to have occurred in some of these incidents.

The account of the Chinese announcement, which appeared in the New York Times on November 24, 1950, contained no indication whether the Chinese reported their forces as having taken any military counteraction against the alleged air violations. However, the Chinese announcement did include the following warning: "Our border defense troops have been instructed to hold the frontier firmly and to deliver counterblows to the provocateurs."

33. SOVIET PROTEST TO IRAN REGARDING AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS IN SOVIET-IRANIAN FRONTIER AREA (May 14 and June 22, 1950)

A Soviet note to Iran of May 14, 1950, which was publicized by Moscow radio on the following day, protested that aerial survey activities employing American experts were being carried

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out along the Iranian-Soviet border by the Iranian Oil Company, Ltd. The note stated that border surveys made during oil prospecting operations were of "military significance," and that the Soviet Union strenuously objected to their being carried out by foreigners. It was asserted that the Iranian Oil Company, Ltd., had brought in United States technicians and equipment despite an earlier Soviet protest of January 31, 1948, to the effect that such activity by foreign representatives in Iran "can create a danger to the frontiers of the U.S.S.R."

On May 16, a U.S. Department of State spokesman commented on the report as follows: "The implication that Iran is in cahoots with the United States in spying is utter and complete nonsense. There have been no aerial surveys of the type mentioned in the Soviet note. We understand that as part of Iran's seven-year economic development program the Iranian government signed contracts with an American company for drilling of exploratory oil wells in northern Iran. This was purely an Iranian operation. No American commercial, government, or other interest is concerned in the matter."

The Iranian government's reply to the Soviet charges elicited a second Soviet note on June 22, 1950. To this, the Iranian government replied on July 15, denying the specific Soviet charges and stating that this was an internal affair, and that "no foreign power has the right to interfere or to express an opinion on such matters." The note also stated that,

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although the establishment of an Iranian oil company was entirely an Iranian venture, Iran considered itself free to purchase machinery from foreign countries and to engage the services of foreign technicians. The note pointed out specifically that the purchase of two drilling machines from the United States required the use of United States citizens for installation purposes.[142]

34. SOVIET PROTESTS AGAINST DROPPING OF OF COLORADO BEETLES BY U.S. PLANES (May 22 to June 7, 1950)

On July 2, 1950, Moscow radio announced that a note had been sent to the United States government, on June 30, protesting the air-dropping of Colorado beetles over East Germany. The Soviet note referred to a report by the East German government "to the effect that between May 22 and June 7 of this year American planes, violating existing rules concerning aviation flights, dropped a large quantity of Colorado beetles" over East Germany "with the aim of inflicting damage to the food supplies of the German people and also of creating a threat that the Colorado beetle would spread to the potato-growing areas in countries bordering on the German Democratic Republic." The note also declared that "the Soviet

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[142] Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, May-June, 1950, and July-August, 1950, Vol. 3, No. 10 and Vol. 4, No. 1, published by the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

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Government insists that the guilty persons be brought to book and expects the United States Government to adopt proper measures to guarantee that there is no repetition of similar acts in the future."[143]

Evidently the Soviet note was issued after U.S. sources had ridiculed East German charges about this same alleged air-drop.[144]

The United States Department of State issued a press statement on July 6, 1950, ridiculing and refuting the charges contained in the Soviet note. An official reply was made in a note dated July 7, 1950.[145] There is no indication of a Soviet reply.

35. CZECH PROTEST AGAINST DROPPING OF COLORADO BEETLES BY U.S. PLANES (June-July, 1950)

In a note dated July 6, 1950, the U.S. Government refuted and ridiculed charges by the Czech press and radio to the effect that U.S. planes had dropped Colorado beetles over Czechoslovakia. On the same day, the State Department refuted similar charges by the Soviet government.[146]

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143 Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, Vol. 4, No. 1, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., July-August, 1950, p. 13.

144 The New York Times, July 2, 1950.

145 Department of State Bulletin, July 24, 1950, p. 134.

146 See case study No. 34.

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Confronted by the official communication of the U.S. government on this subject, the Czech government evidently felt it necessary to bolster its propaganda charges by issuing an official protest. A Czech note of July 10 stated that there was "undeniable proof" that U.S. planes had dropped Colorado beetles.[147] An accompanying note also charged that there had recently been an increase in violations of Czech air space by U.S. planes.[148]

36. CZECH PROTEST AGAINST U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS (July, 1950)

A Czech note of July 10, 1950, charged that U.S. planes had recently "increased their illegal flights over Czechoslovak territory." Some eight instances of alleged violations were cited in the Czech note which demanded an investigation and immediate explanation by U.S. officials.

On the same day, a USAF spokesman in Wiesbaden, Germany, denied the Czech charges as "utterly ridiculous and absolutely untrue."

There is no indication of further communications on the matter.[149]

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147 Department of State Bulletin, July 24, 1950, p. 135; Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, Vol. 4, No. 1, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., July-August, 1950, p. 13.

148 See case study No. 36.

149 The New York Times, July 11, 1950; Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, p. 13.

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37. SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA CHARGE THAT U.S. PLANES DROPPED INCENDIARIES OVER EASTERN GERMANY (July 19 and 27, 1950)

TASS repeated an ADN (East German communist news agency) charge that on July 27, 1950, an American B-45 en route from Frankfurt to Berlin had dropped two incendiary bombs on Oranienbaum from an altitude of 1,500 meters. A similar incident had taken place on July 19, it was charged, when an incendiary had been dropped over Klietz in Saxony-Anhalt.[150]

Significance

There is no independent verification of any overflights of these areas, by U.S. or other planes, on the dates in question.

The communist ADN reported, on August 10, that the East German government had asked the U.S.S.R. for protection "against such criminal plots," i.e., alleged dropping of potato bugs and incendiaries. This story was withdrawn from press and radio circulation shortly afterward. A State Department research report commented as follows: "Numerous reasons have been advanced for these atrocity stories -- alibi for poor crops, shortage of insecticides, build-up for subsequent interference with Western air access to Berlin, excuse for establishing an East German air 'police' -- but

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150 ADN broadcast, August 7, 1950; TASS, August 9, 1950.

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their fundamental purpose is undoubtedly to foment hatred of the United States."[151]

38. COMMUNIST CHARGES OF BRITISH AIR VIOLATIONS IN HONG KONG AREA (August 16 and September 4, 1950)

On August 16, 1950, Chinese communist authorities warned all foreign ships and aircraft against infringing on Chinese territory and territorial waters, especially in the vicinity of Hong Kong. Chinese communist military commanders were ordered to fire on any planes or ships, including warships, that failed to heed the warning.

A TASS dispatch from Peiping charged that British armed forces at Hong Kong were carrying on border violations "for purposes of provocation."[152] The article also charged that one hundred British planes had flown over Chinese territory on fifty different occasions between June and August, 1950.[153]

39. ALLEGED U.S. OVERFLIGHTS OF COMMUNIST CHINA PRIOR TO CHINESE INTERVENTION IN KOREAN WAR[154] (August to November, 1950)

The problem of communist response to air reconnaissance and overflights by foreign planes was encountered under unusual

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151 Soviet Affairs, U.S. Department of State (OIR), September, 1950; SECRET.

152 Pravda, September 4, 1950.

153 Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, Vol. 4, No. 2, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., September, 1950, p. 16.

154 No classified sources were used in the preparation of this

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circumstances in the months preceding the entry of Chinese communist forces into the Korean war. Violations of the air space of one communist country (China) were allegedly being committed by a noncommunist power (United States), which was engaged in military operations against another adjoining communist state (North Korea).

The Chinese communist reaction to these overflights must be viewed in the context of the overall policy adopted by Chinese communist and Soviet leaders for dealing with the "threat" raised by the U.N. police action against North Korea.

The main outlines of communist policy in this instance appear to be sufficiently clear from the course of developments and from public accounts.

The major problem for historical analysis is to consider what role, if any, actual and alleged U.S. air violations of Chinese communist territory played in the decision to intervene with Chinese "volunteers" in the Korean war. The following tentative answers to this question appear to be most plausible:

(1) Air violations of Chinese communist territory were not what brought China into the Korean war. The decision to intervene was motivated by other considerations. The U.S. attitude on Formosa and

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154 (Cont'd)

case study. In view of the interpretation provided, however, the study has been classified CONFIDENTIAL.

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the decision in October to send U.S. forces north of the 38th Parallel were probably of greater importance in this respect than the air violations of Manchuria, though we cannot say whether these events were crucial or merely contributory to the communist decision.

(2) U.S. overflights may have been regarded by Chinese communist leaders as indicators of hostile U.S. intent. But, if so, communist leaders probably did not believe that U.S. leaders were firmly committed to an immediate military attack upon communist China. Even for purposes of domestic war propaganda and indoctrination, the Chinese communists did not usually portray their intervention in Korea as necessary in order to forestall an imminent U.S. invasion of China. Rather, they attempted to legitimize the intervention more in terms of longer-range strategic interests. In any event, the U.S. action in neutralizing Formosa, continued U.S. opposition to seating communist China in the United Nations, and the sending of U.N. forces north of the 38th Parallel were probably regarded as more serious indicators of hostile U.S. intent than such air violations as actually took place.

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(3) U.S. air violations were employed as a convenient peg for communist diplomatic efforts to contest U.S. and U.N. actions in Korea. Thus, formal protests to the U.N. against alleged U.S. air violations were accompanied by demands that communist China be admitted to the deliberations of the U.N. on the Korean issue, and that the United States be forced to withdraw its forces from Korea.

(4) Allegations of U.S. air violations were probably in large part contrived and intended for the purpose of giving additional propaganda legitimacy to the Chinese communist entry into the Korean war. It is probably significant in this respect that communist charges of U.S. air violations were greatly stepped up in late October and November, after initial Chinese forces had already entered Korea, but before the full-scale Chinese offensive was launched in late November.

We have noted, in other historical situations, that the communists sometimes adopted a passive, permissive attitude toward overflights by planes of a foreign power, and sometimes took hostile countermeasures. In the present instance, there is evidence that, as early as August 22, hostile countermeasures were taken (in the form of antiaircraft fire) against U.S.

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planes flying close to the Manchurian-Korean border. The first protest against U.S. air violations came a week later, and concerned an overflight of the Manchurian border on August 27. The first U.S. plane to be shot down by Chinese communist antiaircraft fire from the Manchurian side of the border was an F-51, on October 15. The first reported occasion on which communist planes based on Manchurian airfields attacked U.S. planes over Korea and then returned to their sanctuary was on November 1, when a flight of U.S. F-51's was jumped by six to nine communist jets.

Evidently, then, a policy of hostile military counteraction against air intruders or near-intruders was decided upon at a relatively early stage. It was perhaps not fortuitous that the Molotov-Mao Tze Tung meeting in Peiping in mid-August, at which the decision to intervene may have been taken, was shortly followed by the first evidence of the tough policy toward U.S. planes approaching the Manchurian border.

Finally, it would seem that communist leaders did not believe that hostile military action against U.S. planes approaching or violating the Manchurian border would materially alter U.S. intentions or policy in a more hostile direction.

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40. SOVIET PLANE SHOT DOWN OVER YELLOW SEA BY U.S. NAVY (September 4, 1950)

According to an official U.S. account, a two-engined bomber bearing a Red Star insignia flew toward the center of a U.N. naval formation off the west coast of Korea at approximately the 38th Parallel on September 4, 1950. The bomber opened fire on a U.N. fighter patrol, which returned the fire and shot down the bomber. A U.N. destroyer picked up the body of one of the crew members, a Russian flier whose name and serial number were ascertained and disclosed in the official U.S. press release on September 5.[155]

The United States delegate to the U.N., Warren Austin, made an announcement of the incident before the U.N. Security Council on September 5. Evidently lacking instructions from Moscow, Soviet delegate Malik confined himself on this

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155 A detailed account of the incident was given in a press interview -- by Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen, Tactical Air Commander of the U.S. Navy formation in question (Task Force 77) and his flag operations chief, Commander R. C. Jones -- several days later as the fleet cruised off Inchon Harbor prior to the amphibious assault. Two of three unidentified planes from the direction of Port Arthur turned back as soon as the first U.S. fleet units came into their view. The third bored straight on, inside the "safety tolerance ring" around the fighting ships. A U.S. Navy plane patrol radioed that the rear gunner of the intruding plane was firing at the Navy fighter plane. Ewen then agreed with Jones to "splash" the plane. "All of us felt that if we didn't, there might be Russian snoopers all around us in a day or two." (The Chicago Tribune, October 19, 1950; publication of the interview was delayed until October 19.)

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occasion to labeling the announcement made by Austin as just one more act of "provocation" on Washington's part.

On September 6, a Soviet note to the United States held that the account of the incident given by Austin to the U.N. was "mendacious," denied that the Soviet plane had been near Korea, and demanded reparations and punishment of those responsible. The Soviet plane was said to have been on a routine training flight from Dairen.

Significance

Soviet Motives and Handling of Incident

If the mission of the Soviet plane was to conduct reconnaissance of the U.S. fleet in the Yellow Sea, it remains unexplained why this plane, according to the official U.S. account, should have opened fire. Possibly, the Russian flier thought that the U.S. fighter patrols which intercepted him would surely attempt to shoot him down and that therefore he had nothing to lose by opening fire on them.

It is by no means certain that the Politburo would have protested the incident were it not for the American public statement to the U.N. on September 5. Soviet leaders may have felt obliged to discuss the incident also because of the context in which the U.S. disclosure was made. It may be noted that, even before he was informed by his own government that such an incident had occurred, Soviet delegate Malik

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immediately labeled Austin's announcement as provocative. Malik thus implied that the story about a Soviet flight over a U.S. naval formation in the Korean theater might be a fabrication, tailored for the current debate on a U.S. resolution regarding possible spread of the Korean conflict.

Considering that one of its planes had been shot down over international waters, the Soviet reaction to the incident must be viewed as mild. The explanation appears to be twofold.

First, in order to achieve its reconnaissance and intelligence objectives, the Politburo may be prepared to take risks and to accept occasional losses. If a reconnaissance vehicle or an intelligence agent is lost, the Soviets may feel that the incident need not be protested, and that it should not be publicized unless some special purpose will be served thereby.

Secondly, and perhaps more specifically relevant to the present case, the Politburo is sometimes anxious lest an opponent's counteraction against Soviet reconnaissance operations be a provocation designed to embroil the U.S.S.R. in some sort of international crisis. In the case of the Soviet bomber shot down over the Yellow Sea, the Politburo may have been disturbed by the possibility that the action was designed to implicate the U.S.S.R. militarily or diplomatically in the Korean war. At a very early stage in the Korean war, the Soviets had announced a policy of nonintervention in the

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"Korean civil war." Just prior to the air incident in question, Soviet delegates at the U.N. on several occasions had resisted efforts to charge the U.S.S.R. with complicity for the North Korean attack. For example, in August, 1950, Malik stated that no Soviet supplies had been given to North Korea since before the war broke out. The shooting down of the Russian plane off Korea, therefore, may have been viewed by the Politburo as yet another effort to embroil the U.S.S.R. in Korea.[156]

Hence the apparent intent behind the Soviet diplomatic handling of the incident to minimize the international consequences. The Soviet Foreign Office attempted to have the incident regarded as purely a U.S.S.R.-U.S. problem, and not as a matter for U.N. attention. After reading the Soviet note to U.S. Ambassador Kirk in Moscow, Vishinsky tried four times, during an unsuccessful half-hour meeting, to get Kirk to accept the note. Vishinsky even sent the note to the U.S. Embassy shortly after his meeting with Kirk, but it was promptly returned.[157] At the same time, an unsuccessful effort was also being made by the Soviet Embassy in Washington to deliver the note to the U.S. State Department.[158]

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156 Cf. also Soviet Affairs, September, 1950; SECRET.

157 A rather full account appeared in the New York Times. Additional details are contained in a cable from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow (Kirk) to Secretary of State, No. 623 (September 6, 1950); SECRET. Vishinsky was reported by Kirk to have been very courteous though persistent in arguing that the incident had nothing to do with the Korean war and was a matter of direct contact between the two governments.

158 Memo for files by Richard H. Davis (EE), Department of State, Washington, D.C.

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Further, in reading the Soviet note before the U.N. Security Council on September 6, Malik tried to keep the matter out of council discussions of the Korean question, saying it was a matter which concerned solely the U.S.S.R. and the United States.

The desire to minimize the international consequences of the incident may be inferred, too, from the studied underplaying of the affair in Soviet propaganda treatment of it. Although Moscow rebroadcast the Soviet note in standard fashion, no commentaries followed.

Perhaps for similar reasons, Soviet authorities made no effort to claim the body of the Russian flier which had been recovered from the sea by the U.S. Navy. While presumably less concerned than we with the proper disposition of the body in such a case, the Soviets might nonetheless have demanded the body and accorded ceremonial honors had they wished to exploit the incident for propaganda purposes. The flier was buried in a Pusan cemetery.

Thus, far from reacting strongly to the shooting down of one of its planes, the Politburo seems to have been concerned lest it be tricked into "yielding to provocation" and permit itself to become more directly implicated, militarily or diplomatically, in the Korean affair.

The general Soviet position on the Korean war at this time required Soviet diplomacy to dispute the fact that the

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U.S. was acting legally in Korea under the United Nations. This was probably an additional reason for the Soviet refusal to agree that the U.S. action against the Soviet plane was properly a matter for U.N. consideration, as the United States was contending.

U.S. Handling of the Incident

The U.S. government, too, viewed the incident within the larger context of the Korean war and its peculiar policy problems. In instructing U.S. delegate Austin to disclose the incident before the U.N., the State Department said to him: "The Department does not wish this incident to be blown up to a point which will engage Soviet prestige or which will be harmful to the unity of our Allies in respect to the U.N. action in Korea."[159]

The incident could have been used by the United States to contradict the Soviet contention of nonintervention and nonparticipation in the Korean war by charging, for example, that the Soviets were engaging in reconnaissance of the U.S. fleet on behalf of the North Koreans. But, contrary to what appear to have been the Politburo's fears, U.S. policy was to play down the incident before the United Nations in order not to "engage Soviet prestige." Policy considerations having to

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159 Department of State to USUN (New York), September 4, 1950; SECRET.

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do with maintaining Allied support behind the U.N. action also evidently played some role in the U.S. decision not to exploit the Red bomber incident.

U.S. disclosure of the incident before the U.N. was confined to the bare facts of the case and did not include a demand for a U.N. investigation. In making the announcement, Austin said that the incident pointed up the urgency of taking steps to prevent the spreading of the war in Korea. In a supplementary statement, U.S. delegate Ernest Gross went so far as to note that, since the plane sank, it was not clear whether it was a Soviet or a North Korean plane.

41. ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (October, 1950, to January 15, 1951)

A Czech note dated January 22, 1951, charged that U.S. planes had committed 58 violations of Czech air space between October, 1950, and mid-January, 1951. It is not known whether the note itself (which has not been available for inspection) itemized the alleged violations or gave monthly breakdowns.

A month-by-month tabulation of the alleged U.S. air violations of Czechoslovakia in the period covered in the Czech note, however, was disclosed in a Czech English-language broadcast over the Prague radio on March 13, 1953, following the shooting down of a U.S. jet fighter over northern Bavaria

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on March 10, 1953.[160] The number of alleged violations was as follows:

October, 1950:	8
November, 1950:	18
December, 1950:	6
January 1-15, 1951:	26

According to a Reuters dispatch, the contents of the Czech note were as follows:[161]

(1) The United States was accused of dropping radio transmitters by parachute for subversive elements; some of them were said to have landed accidentally in Austria.

(2) The U.S. planes were said to have intentionally violated Czech air space in order to carry on espionage and to support subversive elements.[162]

(3) The United States was called upon to investigate the 58 cases cited and to report the results.

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160 FBIS, Daily Report, March 17, 1953. It has not been possible to determine whether the same charges appeared in Czech domestic media.

161 The New York Times, January 23, 1951.

162 Similarly, the Czech broadcast of March 13, 1953, stated that the aim of the alleged air violations was "hostile reconnaissance espionage activities" and support of "individual and terrorist actions of hostile elements on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic."

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On January 23, the day following the Czech protest note, an official USAF spokesman in Frankfurt termed the charges of spying by U.S. planes as "completely ridiculous."[163]

On February 7, 1951, U.S. authorities in Frankfurt rejected the charges contained in the Czech note of January 22, stating that they appeared "to have been fabricated solely for propaganda purposes."[164]

There was no comment in Moscow broadcasts on the Czech protest.[165]

42. SOVIET CHARGE THAT U.S. JET FIGHTER BUZZED SOVIET PASSENGER PLANE OVER GERMANY (November 11, 1950)

In a letter to U.S High Commissioner John McCloy, Soviet High Commissioner General V. Chuikov charged that on November 11 a U.S. jet fighter deliberately "buzzed" a Soviet passenger plane in the vicinity of Frankfurt, Germany. The Soviet plane in question was carrying the French Communist leader Thorez to Moscow for medical treatment. General Chuikov characterized the attitude of the U.S. pilot as "provocative" and demanded severe punishment.

The Associated Press reported U.S. officials in Germany as promptly denying the charge.[166]

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163 The New York Times, January 24, 1951.
164 Ibid., February 10, 1951.
165 FBIS, Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts, January 31, 1951; CONFIDENTIAL.
166 The New York Times, November 16, 1950.

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43. CZECH PROTEST OF ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS (Mid-January to June, 1951)

In the course of diplomatic exchanges over the June 8, 1951, incident, involving the landing of two U.S. jets in Czechoslovakia,[167] the Czech government charged, on June 22, that U.S. planes had committed a total of 116 violations since January 15, 1951. Whether initial public disclosure of this charge was made by Czech or U.S. sources is not clear; reference to it appears in a special Washington dispatch of June 26 to the New York Times (issue of June 27, 1951), and also in a speech before the U.N. General Assembly by the Czech delegate, David, on March 23, 1953.

A U.S. note of June 24, 1951, dismissed these charges as unsubstantiated.[168]

44. U.S. ADMISSION OF AIR VIOLATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (February 7, 1951)

On February 9, 1951, the U.S. Embassy in Prague received an official note from the Czechoslovak government protesting that two U.S. jets had penetrated almost to Prague on February 7. The note declared the flights to be "a real provocation."

The U.S. Embassy in Prague immediately denied the charge, but added that it would be carefully investigated.[169]

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167 See case study No. 46.
168 The New York Times, June 27, 1951.
169 Ibid., February 10, 1951.

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Following an investigation, the U.S. Embassy rendered a public apology to the Czech Foreign Office on February 17. Two U.S. jets had "inadvertently crossed the border of the U.S. zone [of Germany] with Czechoslovakia on February 7, when they became lost on a training mission, and, mistaking the Prague beacon for the Mammendorf beacon, flew to the vicinity of Prague."

The U.S. note further declared that steps were being taken to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents, and pointed out "that crews of the United States Air Force flying high-speed aircraft are under standing orders not to go within ten miles of the Czechoslovak border."[170]

45. BULGARIAN CHARGE OF YUGOSLAV-GREEK-TURKISH PLOT TO CARRY OUT AIR RECONNAISSANCE; ALBANIAN CHARGE OF GREEK OVERFLIGHTS; GREEK COUNTERCHARGES (March 2, April 10 and 25, 1951)

The Bulgarian charge was made before the United Nations. Previously, members of the Communist Information Bureau, espedally Bulgaria and Albania, had regularly filed complaints before the U.N. of Greek overflights. The March 2 note from the Bulgarian government, however, was the first which linked Yugoslavia with Greece and Turkey in this respect. The Bulgarian note listed seven violations, all involving flights which allegedly circled low over the frontier area. The warning

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170 The text of the U.S. note was released on February 17, 1951; it is quoted in the Brookings Institution's Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, February, 1951, pp. 30-31.

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was added that Bulgaria would take legitimate defensive measures if such violations continued. The Bulgarian charge was promptly rejected as "propaganda" by the Greek premier.[171]

Albania renewed charges of Greek violations on April 10.[172] On April 25, a countercharge of Bulgarian air violations was made by Greece.[173] On August 14, Bulgaria denied violating Greek air space.[174]

The Soviet radio did not take note of the charges filed by its Balkan Satellites.[175]

46. CZECH DETENTION OF TWO U.S. JET FIGHTER PILOTS[176] (June 8, 1951)

On June 10, 1951, two U.S. Air Force jet fighters were reported in the press as missing from the U.S. Zone of Germany since June 8, 1951, while on a training mission. After unsuccessful searches near the East German border, U.S. authorities, on June 12, asked the Russians to search for the missing planes in communist territory.

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171 The New York Times, March 3 and 4, 1951.

172 Ibid., April 11, 1951.

173 Ibid., April 26, 1951.

174 Ibid., August 15, 1951.

175 FBIS, Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts, March 7 and May 16, 1951; CONFIDENTIAL.

176 The New York Times for the period in question; apart from FBIS reports, classified sources were not utilized.

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Receiving no reply, U.S. sources intimated on June 14 that the jet pilots were being held by the Czech government. The Czech government, however, replied only on June 16, after an official U.S. statement of June 15 had charged the Czechs with lagging in the search for the missing planes.[177]

In its statement of June 16, the Czech government reported that the two U.S. jets and their pilots were being held pending an investigation. A U.S. note on June 24 renewed demands for immediate release of the two U.S. fliers, and held that the landing of the jets on Czech territory had been unintentional. After repeated U.S. demands for immediate release of the pilots, the Czechs agreed on June 30 to release one pilot, an American, to the United States, but stated that the pilot of the second U.S. jet, a Norwegian, would be returned to Norway "at his request."

The Moscow radio all but ignored the incident. The detention of the pilots was not mentioned by the Moscow radio.[178]

47. SWEDISH OVERFLIGHTS OF SOVIET TERRITORY (July 17 and 26, 1951)

In the course of an exchange of notes on the shooting down of two Swedish planes in June, 1952,[179] the Soviet government

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177 For text, see Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 24, No. 626, June 25, 1951, p. 1019.

178 FBIS, Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts, June 27 and December 5, 1951; CONFIDENTIAL.

179 See case study No. 66.

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had occasion to recall earlier air violations by Swedish military aircraft on July 17 and 26, 1951. Evidently the latter violations had not been mentioned publicly at the time by either side; the reference to them in the Soviet note of June 19, 1952, therefore, constituted a belated disclosure. It would seem that disclosure was made at this time in order to strengthen the diplomatic and propaganda position taken by the Soviets with respect to the June, 1952, incidents, which had inflamed Swedish opinion.

Following Soviet disclosure of the earlier violations, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs immediately confirmed (in a press release dated June 20, 1952) that the two violations had taken place, and that the Swedish government had conveyed its regrets to the Soviet government at the time.

The only facts available regarding the 1951 Swedish violations are those contained in this press release. According to it, on July 17, 1951, "a Swedish military aircraft came by mistake to a point northwest of Libau about 2.2 nautical miles from the coast." And, on July 26, 1951, "a Swedish military aircraft had been in the area northwest of Vindau and at one moment came to a point somewhere more than five nautical miles from the coast."

Significance

Both of these earlier Swedish violations, it will be noted, took place in a part of the Baltic considered extremely

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sensitive by the Soviets, in fact very near the area in which the U.S. Navy Privateer had been shot down on April 8, 1950. It would seem either that the Soviets did not attempt hostile military counteraction against these two Swedish planes or else that, if such action was attempted, it was not successful.

On the basis of the scanty information available, therefore, the possibility cannot be excluded that the Soviets were not at this time applying their hostile air-defense policy toward Swedish and perhaps other planes skirting the Soviet perimeter in the Baltic. Another possibility, of course, is that the intention to apply hostile countermeasures existed at the time, but that Soviet air-defense forces did not have an opportunity to implement it in these two cases.

In the absence of more information, we can only speculate on the true meaning of the two incidents in terms of Soviet air-defense policy. The interpretation favored here is that the Soviets either had not been able to take military counteraction against the two Swedish planes in July, 1951, or else did not want to. We rule out, in other words, the possibility that Soviet planes attempted hostile counteraction and were unsuccessful. For in this event, judging by general Soviet disclosure practice in such cases, they would not have initiated diplomatic disclosure of the incidents via a protest to the Swedish government. In general, the Soviets have resorted to disclosure -- diplomatic and public -- only when

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they did not attempt military counteraction against the allegedly intruding plane.

48. ALLEGED AIR DROP OF U.S. ESPIONAGE AGENTS INTO THE MOLDAVIAN REPUBLIC, U.S.S.R. (Summer, 1951)

On December 19, 1951, TASS announced that two U.S.-trained spies who, it alleged, had been parachuted into the Moldavian Socialist Republic in the summer of 1951, had been executed by a firing squad. TASS gave the men's names as A. I. Osmanov and I. K. Sarancev[180] and said that they had admitted having been recruited from displaced-persons camps in West Germany by the U.S. intelligence service, and that they had pleaded guilty to charges of espionage and diversionist activities.

At the trial, according to TASS, the men said they had been dropped from a U.S. plane under cover of night. Open parachutes were said to have been found near the spot where the two men were arrested.[181]

49. SOVIET EFFORT TO CHANGE ROUTE OF VIENNA AIR CORRIDOR (August, 1951)

In August, 1951, the Soviet members of the Quadripartite Air Directorate in Vienna introduced a proposal to substitute

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180 This name was translated as Tarantsev in the FBIS translation of the broadcast version of a pamphlet on vigilance by Ekhalkov. (FBIS, Daily Report, July 15, 1953, p. CC-2.)

181 The TASS announcement, as reported by Reuters, appeared in The New York Times, December 19, 1951.

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a new air corridor for the existing Vienna-Graz corridor which had been agreed upon in 1946.

The Soviet proposal was advanced on the grounds that it would contribute to flight safety, since, it was stated, Allied flights in the present air corridor conflicted with Soviet military air traffic.

The undisclosed motive behind the Soviet proposal, according to U.S. intelligence estimates, was to deny Western powers opportunities for important air reconnaissance which the existing air corridor afforded.[182]

50. U.S. PROTEST OF SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS OF TEMPELHOF AIRDROME IN BERLIN (August, 1951)

The New York Times reported briefly, on August 16, 1951, that U.S. officials in Berlin had protested to the Soviets against a flight by Soviet jets at 600 feet over Tempelhof airdrome. No further details are available.

51. SOVIET PROTEST OF TURKISH AIR VIOLATION (August 13, 1951)

A Soviet note to Turkey, apparently sent on August 13, protested an alleged violation of Russian air space. The Soviet

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182 U.S. Embassy, Vienna (Donnelly) to Secretary of State, No. 840 (August 30, 1951); SECRET.

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radio did not in this case observe its custom of broadcasting the contents of the note; nor, evidently, did the Soviets make any public disclosure of the incident.[183] It would seem, therefore, that disclosure of the Soviet note was made by Turkish sources. It has not been possible to verify this; FBIS personnel were unable to locate references to the note in Turkish broadcasts.

Shortly after the Soviet note, the Beirut radio reported that the Turkish government had apologized to the U.S.S.R. for an unintentional overflight by eight Turkish planes, caused by bad weather.[184]

52. ALLEGED U.S. OVERFLIGHT OF RUMANIA FOR ESPIONAGE PURPOSES (October 18, 1951)

In a diplomatic note dated December 15, 1951, and publicized shortly thereafter, the Rumanian government charged that the United States had parachuted two spies into Transylvania on October 18, 1951. The flight of the U.S. plane was said to have originated in Athens. The Rumanian note further alleged that the two spies had confessed having been recruited in an Italian displaced-persons camp and trained in

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183 FBIS, Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts, August 29 and December 5, 1951; CONFIDENTIAL.

184 FBIS, Daily Report, August 22, 1952; RESTRICTED.

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an "American special spy school" in Italy. Their mission, according to the alleged confession, was to organize guerrilla activity and to gather information about the Rumanian Army.

In a note of December 20, the U.S. government rejected these charges as "ridiculous," and said it could not "avoid the conclusion that this fantastic incident.../had/ been conjured up by the Rumanian Government in order to furnish some basis for an over-all propaganda campaign directed against the United States." The U.S. note stated further that "the purposes of this propaganda campaign and of the invention of such incidents are best known to those controlling the Rumanian Government," and that the government of the United States was unwilling to dignify them with further comment.

The Rumanian Foreign Ministry stated, on December 22, that the United States reply, which had "ignored the obvious facts," would not be accepted and was an attempt to evade "the responsibility of the United States government for its aggressive step against the Rumanian people."

On December 27, the Rumanian government announced that five men, not two as previously reported, had been dropped by parachute on Rumanian territory, and that they had been tried and convicted as "terrorists, diversionists and American tools." The announcement stated that four of the men had been executed, and that the other had committed suicide.[185]

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185 Current Developments in United States Foreign Policy, The Brookings Institution, December, 1951, pp. 31-32. For texts of notes see Department of State Bulletin, December 31, 1951.

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53. U.S. NAVY PLANE SHOT DOWN BY SOVIET FIGHTERS OFF VLADIVOSTOK (November 6, 1951)

A two-engine U.S. Navy bomber of the Neptune type was shot down near Vladivostok by Soviet fighters on November 6, 1951. Diplomatic disclosure of the incident was made on November 7, when Gromyko attempted to deliver an official Soviet note to Mr. Cummings, U.S. chargé d'affaires in Moscow. The Soviet note protested an alleged violation of Soviet frontiers by the Navy aircraft. After considerable discussion Mr. Cummings accepted the note from Gromyko for "information" only, on the grounds that U.S. aircraft in the Far East were under U.N. command.[186]

Neither the air incident nor the Soviet note was publicized immediately by the Soviets or by the U.S. government. The first public disclosure of the incident came only on November 23, and was made by the U.S. Navy.[187] At the same time, news of the Soviet protest of November 7 was given to the U.S. press. It was intimated in the press that U.S. officials had delayed disclosing the incident because the Navy plane in question, unlike the Navy Privateer shot down in the Baltic in April, 1950, was on a U.N. rather than a U.S. mission. News of the Soviet

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186 Moscow (Cummings) to Secretary of State, No. 801 (November 7, 1951); CONFIDENTIAL; see also The New York Times, November 25, 1951.

187 The New York Times, November 24, 1951.

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note had been withheld -- according to a State Department source -- to give the U.N. Command in the Far East time to investigate the incident and to search for survivors.

U.S. press accounts speculated that the Navy Neptune had been on antisubmarine patrol. The official U.S. Navy announcement (November 23), however, stated merely that the plane had been on patrol duty. Still another version of the Navy plane's mission was contained in an official U.S. communication to the U.N. (November 24), which stated that the plane had been on "weather reconnaissance."[188]

U.S. sources did not state that the plane had been armed, but this was implicit in the absence of a specific disclaimer. Instead, the U.S. communication to the U.N. contented itself with a denial that Soviet territory had been violated and a charge that the Navy plane had been attacked without warning. The prescribed route of the plane, it was pointed out, did not approach closer than 40 miles to U.S.S.R. territory, and the plane's crew had been thoroughly briefed not to approach closer than 20 miles to Soviet territory under any circumstances. The U.S. communication to the U.N. could only surmise that an intentional or unplanned violation of Russian territorial waters had not been made. A subsequent Navy announcement

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188 The New York Times, November 25, 1951. A classified cable from CINCUNC (Tokyo) to Dept. AR (Washington, D.C.) for OSD, number CX 57014 (November 10, 1951), stated that the missing Navy plane was on a "routine daily shipping reconnaissance of the Japan Sea in connection with U.N. operations in Korea." SECRET.

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(November 26), however, asserted categorically that the missing plane had been tracked by radar and was known to have followed a prearranged course which would have positively kept it 40 miles from the Siberian coast.[189]

The United States did not request a U.N. investigation, nor did it give any indication that the Soviet government would be asked to discipline those responsible for the incident, pay damages, or give assurances against a repetition of the incident. U.N. Secretary Lie indicated that no action would be taken by the U.N. unless the Soviets or the United States demanded a Security Council debate.[190] The matter was dropped by both sides, the Soviets contenting themselves with a request (December 7, 1951) that the Soviet version of the incident be circulated to U.N. members.[191]

Significance

Soviet Motive and Handling of Incident

Available evidence supports the view that the shooting down of the U.S. Navy plane was not accidental but a matter of deliberate policy. The Soviet protest note contained the same stereotyped version of the "facts" that had been used in the April 8, 1950 (and subsequent) incidents:

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189 The New York Times, November 27, 1951. The facts reported in this U.S. Navy press release were substantially the same as in CINCUNC (Tokyo) to Dept. AR (Washington, D.C.) for OSD, Number CX 57014 (November 10, 1951); SECRET.

190 The New York Times, November 25, 1951.

191 Ibid., December 8, 1951.

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> ...Upon the approach of two Soviet fighters with the intention of forcing the American plane, which had violated the Soviet state frontier, to land on a Soviet airport, the American plane opened fire on them. The Soviet airplanes were forced to open return fire, after which the American airplane went off in the direction of the sea and disappeared.[192]

It is our impression that this stereotyped version of the "facts" is used whenever the Politburo wishes to convey the idea that the incident in question occurred as a result of policy, i.e., operational implementation of standing air-defense instructions to the Soviet forces concerned. The fact that in the present case, unlike earlier and later incidents, these instructions were not cited in a Soviet diplomatic note does not weaken the interpretation advanced here. For, as has been noted, the instructions are cited not in the first Soviet note on an incident but in a subsequent one, if diplomatic exchanges continue. In the present case there was only one Soviet note; hence, no special significance can be attached to the failure to cite the instructions.

The same interpretation of Soviet motives is also suggested by the fact that, as in the case of the Navy Privateer incident in the Baltic, the Soviet pilots responsible for the act were decorated and publicly commended.[193]

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192 Soviet note of November 7, 1951; Department of State Bulletin, December 3, 1951.

193 Soviet press announcement of November 23, 1951, which was given prominent, front-page display. The two Soviet fliers in this case were awarded the same medal as the Soviet fliers in the Baltic incident of April, 1950. The announcement itself was virtually the same noncommittal citation as in the Baltic case. (Department of State, OIR, "Intelligence Brief," November 28, 1951; CONFIDENTIAL.)

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None of the commentaries on the incident, public or confidential, which have been examined in preparing the present study speculated that a special political motive underlay the Soviet action in this case. The Politburo's unwillingness to exploit the incident for propaganda purposes also points to the absence of a specific political motive; the official Soviet note was broadcast without any commentaries. Thus, no effort was made in Soviet diplomatic or propaganda communications to point up any specific political lesson or conclusion to be drawn from the incident by the United States, and no such political conclusion is evident. For example, in arguing that Mr. Cummings should accept the Soviet protest note, Gromyko made no effort to indicate that the Soviet action had anything more than a technical air-defense motivation. When Cummings expressed regret that an American plane might have violated Soviet territory, Gromyko replied: "This is good to hear from you, but it would be even better if U.S. authorities take all measures to assure no further action of this nature. This is not the first time...as you know, such actions have occurred not only in the East but in the West beginning in 1950."[194]

Two or three subsidiary questions about Soviet motives remain which are possibly relevant in assessing the significance of the air incident. First, given a technical air-defense motive as hypothesized, did the Soviets go out of their way to

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194 Moscow (Cummings) to Secretary of State, No. 801 (November 7, 1951); CONFIDENTIAL.

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create the incident, or did they really believe the U.S. Navy plane to be guilty of a violation? We have already noted the official U.S. report that according to radar-scope data the plane in question did not approach closer than 40 miles to the Siberian coast on this mission. On the basis of this information, the possibility cannot be excluded that the Soviets deliberately went beyond their 12-mile territorial waters limit to shoot down the Navy plane. If so, alternative explanations suggest themselves. The Soviets may have been looking for a convenient occasion -- i.e., a U.S. flight which approached near enough -- on which to demonstrate that they had a new air-defense policy in the Far East. They might have desired to convey this change in policy to us as soon as possible -- and hence did not wait for a real violation to occur -- perhaps in order to undo the impression created by the remarkable passivity of their air defenses when two U.S. jet fighters attacked one of their airfields in the Vladivostok area on October 8, 1950.[195]

Extension of Severe Soviet Air-Defense Policy to the Far East

In any event, whether deliberately staged outside Soviet territorial waters or not, the incident revealed an extension to the Far East of the new and tougher Soviet air-defense policy that had been demonstrated first in the Baltic incident of

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195 See RAND RM-1349-Supplement (TOP SECRET).

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April, 1950. Before November, Soviet military reaction to "hostile" flights around its borders in the Far East did not go beyond firing warning bursts; in some cases, it was even more permissive. Now in the Far East, as in the Baltic, the Soviet Union served dramatic notice by deed rather than words that air intruders would be forced to land and, if they "resisted," shot down.

Soviet Disclosure and Propaganda Policy

We have hypothesized that, when Soviet forces have shot down a foreign plane, the Politburo generally prefers to let the action speak for itself as an indication of its attitude regarding defense of Soviet "rights." In this instance, however, the Politburo deviated from its usual custom and followed up the Soviet military reaction immediately with a diplomatic communication one day after the incident.

Why did the Soviets initiate disclosure in this case, contrary to their usual custom? The answer is suggested if one recalls the April 8, 1950, Baltic incident when the Soviets became quite concerned over the meaning of a U.S. air search for the missing plane. With the Baltic incident in mind, the Politburo may have deemed it expedient on this occasion to open up diplomatic communication immediately in order to forestall or control any undesirable U.S. reaction that might ensue.

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Some interest has been raised by the fact that Soviet propaganda follow-up to the present incident was unusually reticent.[196] When a U.S. Navy Privateer was shot down in the Baltic, there was considerable Soviet propaganda comment and celebration of the event. In the present case, however, it is quite likely that the Politburo would have been satisfied with a private diplomatic warning to the United States of the new and firmer Soviet air-defense policy along its Far East perimeter. The official Soviet note of November 7 and, indeed, the incident itself were not disclosed publicly by the Soviets, but by Warren Austin in his statement before the United Nations on November 23. The first Russian broadcast of the note did not come until November 30.

However, Soviet propaganda reticence in the present instance was consistent with the restrained treatment that had been given previous air incidents in the Far East since the onset of the Korean war. In the downing of the Soviet plane in the Yellow Sea and the attack on a Vladivostok area airfield by U.S. jet fighters, the Kremlin did not play up the incidents in its propaganda, though it did promptly publish the text of its diplomatic protest notes.[197] In those two incidents and in the present one, Soviet propaganda reticence may have been dictated in part by a desire to avoid becoming associated in any way with the Korean war. In the present case, also, the Politburo may

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196 FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Broadcasts, December 13, 1951.
197 See case studies Nos. 40 and 124.

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have decided against a propaganda follow-up of the incident lest it stiffen thereby the attitude of the U.N. negotiators at the Korean cease-fire talks.[198]

U.S. Handling of the Incident

U.S. policy-makers decided that, since the U.N. had been used previously as a channel for handling plane incidents growing out of the Korean war, it should be used again in the present instance. A recommendation was made by the State Department, with the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that the United States not reply directly to the Soviet note of November 7 but that, rather, the commander-in-chief of U.N. forces in Korea, General Ridgway, be asked to submit a special report on the matter.[199]

By making use of U.N. offices in the present case, the United States supported its general position that its military operations in the Korean theater were under U.N. jurisdiction. But this procedure was not without disadvantage. It appears to have ruled out a direct diplomatic approach to the Russians later, when, as might have been anticipated, discussion of the incident within the U.N. proved ineffectual.

The State Department did not consider it feasible to press charges against the Soviets in the present case -- as, for

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198 This possibility was suggested in a State Department OIR "Intelligence Brief" (November 28, 1951); CONFIDENTIAL.

199 Department of State to American Embassy, Paris, for the Secretary of State (date not available); SECRET.

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example, by requesting an international investigation of the incident. The State Department's attitude in this respect was based upon an appreciation of certain problems and risks which such a course of action would have entailed:[200]

1. Had the Soviets accepted a demand for an international investigation, the United States would have found itself in an awkward position. Not handicapped by any reluctance to fabricate evidence where necessary, the Soviets would have had little difficulty in "proving" their case by "documented" charges and "eyewitness" accounts. In contrast, the United States would have few "facts" to present owing to the nature of the incident -- the fact that we knew the fate of the plane only from the Soviet protest note, that there were no survivors or records apart from the radar-scope report, etc.

2. To take the case to the Security Council would certainly have stirred up public interest, but with no result other than to show the ineffectiveness of the Security Council and of the U.N. in a case of this kind. Nevertheless,

3. It might have been useful to publicize the case further if it were desired to convince the U.S. public of the ruthless and unprincipled nature of the Soviet regime. But since

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200 The following statement of considerations which deterred the State Department from taking further diplomatic action in this case paraphrases remarks made by Mr. U. Alexis Johnson, Department of State (FE). to Captain J. F. Enright, U.S. Navy (Op-35) on April 25, 1952, and by Mr. Johnson, Mr. Henkin (UND), and Mr. Nolting (G) to Captain Enright and Mr. Sullivan (Office of the Secretary of Defense) on May 22, 1952. See State Department memo of conversations; CONFIDENTIAL.

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this was already known to the U.S. public, "revival of the incident would therefore only increase the already great tension between the two countries to no apparent specific purpose."

54. THE RANSOM OF U.S. FLIERS BY HUNGARY[201] (November-December, 1951)

On November 18, 1951, a U.S. military plane, a C-47, was reported missing while en route from Munich to Belgrade. The plane, manned by a crew of four, was carrying diplomatic cargo. Two days later, the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade announced that the missing plane had been fired upon by Hungarian and Rumanian border guards.[202] On the following day, the Hungarian and Rumanian governments charged that the U.S. plane had violated their frontiers. This charge was contained in official notes to the United States which apparently were in reply to U.S. requests to the governments concerned for information on the whereabouts of the missing plane.

On December 3, TASS stated that the missing plane had been forced down by Soviet fighters near Papa, Hungary, after violating the Rumanian border. The TASS report also took pains

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201 The following case study is based largely on unclassified materials; only a few classified State Department cables were available for inspection at the time the study was prepared.

202 Later information, however, definitely confirmed that the U.S. plane had not been fired upon. See cable from HICOG, Munich, to Secretary of State, No. 436 (January 3, 1952); SECRET.

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to justify the action of the Soviet fighters as being in accord with treaty provisions governing the stationing of Soviet forces in Hungary. The U.S. C-47, TASS charged, was engaged in an espionage mission. The four U.S. fliers, TASS reported, had been turned over to the Hungarian government.

The U.S. State Department pressed for immediate release of the plane and its crew, denying the charges of espionage which were being widely publicized by communist sources. At the United Nations, Vishinsky made several strident statements on the C-47 incident, which he depicted as an instance of U.S. efforts to incite revolt within the U.S.S.R. bloc. Following Vishinsky's explicit threat of strong action against the fliers, the Hungarian government in a note to the United States on December 21, announced that the four airmen were to be tried. The U.S. chargé d'affaires in Moscow delivered an oral protest and requested Moscow to intervene (December 22). On December 23, Budapest announced the "confession" and conviction of the fliers, each of whom was sentenced to a three-month prison term or a fine of $30,000. Confiscation of the plane was also announced.

On December 26, the U.S. government stated it was willing to pay the fines if the fliers were promptly released. Two days later, the fine was paid and the fliers were released. Several days after that, the U.S. government announced that, in retaliation, Hungarian consulates in the United States would be closed and that issuance of passports for travel in Hungary

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would be discontinued. American public opinion and many U.S. political leaders called for sterner action against the Hungarian government, such as, for example, breaking off diplomatic relations.

Some weeks later, Secretary of State Acheson was reported to have given the Senate Armed Services Committee "top secret" reasons for payment of the fines. Members of the Senate committee later stated that disclosure of these reasons would do more harm than good. (February 5, 1952.) Acheson's reasons were, therefore, not made public (and were not available for inclusion in this report).

Subsequently, the U.S. State Department threatened both the Soviet and Hungarian governments with legal action unless they gave a satisfactory explanation of the detention of the four U.S. airmen and returned the plane and its cargo. The United States charged that an "exhaustive survey" had revealed "serious discrepancies" between the facts and the statements made by Soviet and Hungarian authorities. The United States also complained that it had been deprived of the appropriate legal documents of the trial. The Soviet government, in reply, refused to receive the demands made in the U.S. note on the ground that they were misaddressed. Hungary, in turn, rejected the U.S. demands. The U.S. position was reiterated in a new note and was again rejected by the Hungarian government.[203]

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203 Texts of the notes are in the Department of State Bulletin: (1952), pp. 7, 128, 980-984; (1953), pp. 51-52, 257-259. See also The New York Times, December 3, 5, 7, 12, 22-30, 1951; December 11 and 18, 1952; January 24; February 1 and 11, 1953.

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In March, 1953, the U.S. Department of State presented new notes to the Soviet and Hungarian governments, in which it presented in considerable detail its case against the two governments. The United States demanded return of the plane and its cargo, return of the fines paid to obtain the release of the crew, and payment of damages to the airmen arising from their detention and treatment, as well as damages to the United States. A detailed statement of the facts of the incident and of the subsequent treatment of the crew was given in the U.S. notes. Finally, it was asserted that, if the two governments contested liability, the U.S. government proposed that the dispute be presented for hearing and decision in the International Court of Justice.[204]

The Soviet and Hungarian governments replied negatively on June 19, 1953, and November 2, 1953, respectively. Thereupon, on March 3, 1954, the United States filed suit for damages before the International Court of Justice at The Hague. At the same time, in an official announcement, the U.S. government indicated that its purpose in bringing the case before The Hague

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204 U.S. Department of State, "Text of Notes Presenting Formal Diplomatic Claims by the United States against the Soviet and Hungarian Governments in the Case of the Four American Airmen and the C-47 Airplane 6026 Brought down in Hungary on November 19, 1951." (State Department release of March 17, 1953, summarized in Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 28 (1953), p. 496, and in The New York Times, March 18, 1953.) For a detailed summary and interpretation of the case from the standpoint of international law, see Oliver J. Lissitzyn, "The Treatment of Aerial Intruders in Recent Practice and International Law," American Journal of International Law, Vol. 47, No. 4, October, 1953.

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was to call attention to the need for an "authoritative... formulation of the rules of law which civilized governments should observe in these fields." It may be noted, however, that the issue presented to the court concerned the willful and unlawful seizure of the U.S. plane and the treatment of its crew.[205] This excludes, therefore, the additional important question of the actions which a territorial sovereign may properly take against an unauthorized overflight. On July 15, 1954, the International Court of Justice announced that the Soviet Union and Hungary had refused to accept its jurisdiction in the suits brought by the United States government. Accordingly, the court stated, the suits were being removed from its list of pending cases.[206]

Significance

The present case is a striking demonstration of the manner in which the Soviet Union or its Satellites may seize upon air incidents in periods of nonhostilities to advance cold-war objectives. In this case, the communists quickly incorporated the fact that a U.S. C-47 made an emergency landing behind the Iron Curtain into their then current campaign against alleged

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205 The New York Times, March 4, 1954. For the official U.S. announcements on this occasion, see Department of State Bulletin, March 22, 1954, pp. 449-451.

206 The New York Times, July 16, 1954.

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U.S. efforts to create subversion inside the Soviet orbit.[207] This Soviet propaganda campaign was focused on the provision in the Mutual Security Act of October, 1951, which was alleged to set up funds for "subversion." The section of the Act in question provided funds to finance the integration of "selected" Soviet-bloc refugees into NATO armies, or "for other purposes."

A communist propaganda build-up on this theme had already been underway for several months when the C-47 episode occurred. The purpose of the preparatory propaganda campaign was evidently to pave the way for Soviet charges against this provision of the Mutual Security Act before the United Nations. From Moscow's standpoint, the C-47 incident was eminently suited for this purpose; and it was heavily exploited by communist propaganda. (In contrast, the shooting down of a U.S. Navy plane off Vladivostok, shortly before the C-47 incident, was given only routine treatment by communist media.)[208] The propaganda value of the C-47 episode for Moscow's attack on the above-noted provision of the Mutual Security Act is indicated by the extensive use made of it by Vishinsky before the United Nations.

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207 It is of interest that initial Soviet interrogation of the pilot of the American C-47 was directed toward ascertaining whether he had dropped parachutists. He was told by a Soviet colonel on approximately November 30, after the close of the interrogation: "your case has been decided; you are to be freed." But, instead, on December 3, the personnel of the C-47 were turned over to Hungarian authorities. (Munich to Secretary of State, No. 426, December 30, 1951; SECRET.) A further analysis of the debriefing of the crew upon their release by the communists disclosed that the Russians and Hungarians had not been able to obtain any evidence that the crew of the C-47 had engaged in any covert activity or had the intention of doing so. (Munich to Secretary of State, No. 427, December 31, 1951; SECRET.)

208 See case study No. 53.

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A more far-reaching cold-war set-back for the United States that might have arisen from this incident was possibly avoided by the firm attitude taken by U.S. officials and American public opinion in the face of communist threats to try the crew of the C-47 on charges of espionage.[209] The development of events suggests a quick change in communist plans in this respect, possibly in response to the angry U.S. reaction. On December 19, in a strident speech before the U.N., Vishinsky hinted that the trial of the U.S. fliers would be a full-dress propaganda demonstration of the thesis that "subversion does not pay." Vishinsky intimated that the U.S. fliers might be tried for espionage and expressed the hope that they would receive "all due attention by military justice authorities." He declared later that, while he did not know personally what would happen to the U.S. fliers, "any spies caught" in the Soviet bloc "will be tried according to Soviet [sic] law."[210]

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209 The materials examined in preparing this study do not indicate how far the State Department went in making clear to the Hungarian government its attitude in the event the U.S. crew members were tried for espionage. It is unlikely, however, that a formal ultimatum as in the Yugoslav case (case study No. 13) was given the Hungarian government. The present account is adapted from the analysis presented in the Department of State, OIR, Intelligence Brief, "Trends in Soviet-Communist Tactics," December 27, 1951; CONFIDENTIAL.

210 A State Department cable, Budapest to Secretary of State, No. 461 (December 28, 1951, CONFIDENTIAL) reported that Vishinsky's remarks were taken in Budapest as a forecast of an espionage trial with a probable death sentence. "Tension throughout the city mounted visibly on December 21 and 22."

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Vishinsky's statements received added emphasis in the simultaneous and highly unusual announcement by Moscow that two self-admitted spies for the United States had been executed after parachuting into the U.S.S.R.[211] These "spies," it was alleged, were two D.P.'s who had been recruited in West Germany and dropped into the Moldavian Republic by a U.S. plane based in Greece. Vishinsky's speech was published in full in the Soviet press of December 21. On the same day, a Hungarian note to the United States, published in Moscow, announced officially that the fliers would be tried for overflying Hungarian territory "with the criminal intention of dropping spies and diversionists." The Hungarian Foreign Office stated explicitly that the U.S. fliers were to be tried on both counts. On the following day (December 22), however, the Hungarian government announced that the trial was over. The American fliers were convicted (only) of "deliberately" violating the Hungarian frontier because they had failed to land voluntarily although they knew they were over Hungary. Furthermore, instead of claiming a "premeditated intention" to drop spies, the Hungarian communiqué contained the weak assertion that the presence in the plane of such equipment as parachutes and a separate radio made it "plausible" that they were to be dropped to "spies and diversionists."

The sudden trial and relatively mild sentence suggest a desire on the part of the Politburo to dispose of an explosive

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211 See case study No. 48.

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issue as expeditiously as possible without loss of face. In view of the extreme expectations created by the communist propaganda build-up and by Vishinsky's statements, the hasty, unpublicized trial and the sentence of three months' imprisonment or fines totaling $120,000 -- where Hungarian law provided for a possible five-year imprisonment -- were anticlimactic.

The C-47 incident was of some interest also insofar as it reflected Soviet air capabilities and policy with respect to unauthorized overflights of its European Satellites. After a thorough investigation of the facts of the incident, the U.S. Department of State was able to characterize the Soviet and Satellite air-defense response to the unintentional overflight committed by the C-47 as follows:

> During the flight and thereafter both the Soviet Government and the Hungarian Government were fully aware...that the /C-47/ airplane flew north of its fixed course in Yugoslavia on its trip eastward, had overflown Yugoslavia and entered Rumania, and had while attempting to return westward crossed the Hungarian frontier. The airplane was observed and monitored in its entire westward flight by Soviet and other Soviet-allied ground authorities from approximately 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. local time, first in Rumania and then in Hungary; and when the plane was brought down at 6 p.m. by the Soviet aircraft it had almost reached the British occupied zone of Austria. Moreover, the Hungarian authorities near the eastern border of Hungary had notified Soviet authorities in Hungary of the westward course of the plane and the Soviet and Hungarian Governments thereupon agreed that the plane should be permitted to overfly Hungary, be observed in its flight and then be brought down by the Soviet aircraft stationed near the western border of Hungary.

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> ...The Soviet authorities and their allies deliberately permitted the plane to cross the Hungarian frontier and to overfly Hungarian territory, and then brought it down, lest, continuing in its flight, it would in a few minutes arrive safely in the British zone of Austria, or in other territory not controlled by the Soviet Government or its allies....[212]

The U.S. note added that the C-47, having repeatedly signaled that it was in distress and was seeking a safe landing place, was finally intercepted by aircraft and shown to a landing place. The crew members of the C-47 were not aware of having overflown Rumania or Hungary; they thought that the plane was over Yugoslavia throughout the entire flight. Nor did they realize until later that the intercepting aircraft were Soviet and that they were being led to a Soviet airfield. Nor, finally, were they of the impression that they were being "forced down."

The reaction of the Soviet and communist air-defense system to the overflight of the C-47 thus suggests that at that time a more flexible and less severe air-defense policy was in effect over these Satellite areas than was being applied elsewhere around the Soviet perimeter.

55. CZECH OVERFLIGHTS OF U.S. ZONE OF GERMANY (March 4, 1952)

According to a West German police report, two MiG's with Czech markings were sighted over Weiden, in the U.S. zone of

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212 U.S. State Department note to the Soviet government, March 17, 1953, as cited in Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 28 (1953), p. 496.

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Germany (approximately twelve miles from the Czech border). This report was confirmed several months later, on June 6, by a U.S. Army representative in West Germany. No further information on this incident has been collected.[213]

56. U.S. NAVY PATROL BOMBER FIRED ON OVER CHINA SEA (April 1, 1952)

On April 4, 1952, the U.S. Navy reported that one of its patrol bombers had been slightly damaged by gunfire from an unidentified trawler in the China Sea on the night of April 1. The incident took place about 100 miles southeast of Shanghai. The Navy plane was able to return to its base. No mention was made of casualties. No other information about this incident is available.[214]

57. FRENCH COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT ATTACKED BY SOVIET FIGHTERS IN BERLIN CORRIDOR (April 29, 1952)

On April 29, 1952, while flying the air corridor from Frankfurt to Berlin, an Air France commercial DC-4 was intercepted by two Soviet MiG's. The Soviet planes maneuvered in such fashion as to force the French plane down from 7,500

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213 The New York Times, March 5, 1952, and June 7, 1952.
214 Ibid., April 5, 1952.

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to 2,500 feet; they also fired upon it, inflicting material damage to the craft and wounding two passengers. The plane succeeded in evading the Soviet planes and in reaching Berlin safely.

On the same day, French-British-U.S. occupation officials protested the attack to Soviet authorities. The Soviet reply by Major General Trusov, also made on April 29, charged that the French DC-4 had violated East German territory, had ignored signals from Soviet fighters ordering it to land, and had continued to make a deeper penetration over East German territory in the direction of Leipzig. Thereupon, the Soviet note continued, Soviet fighters fired a "warning burst" at the DC-4.

On April 30, a second three-power note rejected the Soviet contention, claiming that the French plane had been within the air corridor. But even if the French craft had violated the corridor, the Allied note continued, "to fire in any circumstances, even by way of warning, on an unarmed aircraft in time of peace, wherever that aircraft may be, is entirely inadmissible and contrary to all standards of civilized behavior." Simultaneously the French government issued a note on the matter to the Soviet government.

No Soviet reply to these notes was forthcoming; accordingly, on May 9, the three Western powers invited Soviet occupation authorities at the Berlin Air Safety Center to participate in

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a joint examination of the extent of the damage. This request was ignored by the Soviet chairman of the Soviet Control Commission. On June 26, the high commissioners of the three Western powers asked Soviet High Commissioner Chuikov to hasten a reply to their note of April 29. No evidence of a Soviet reply has come to our attention.

Significance

Western Speculation as to Soviet Motives

The Air France incident occurred at a time when Western observers were noting with some apprehension signs of renewed Soviet pressure in Germany. The air incident, viewed from this perspective, touched off considerable speculation as to the underlying Soviet motive.

There was little disposition to view the Soviet action against the French plane as anything but deliberate.[215] The

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215 USAFE A-2 estimated Soviet radar and air-defense capability along the Berlin air corridors at that time as follows: Soviet fighter aircraft are kept on the alert and are able in a minimum period of time under visual conditions to intercept Western aircraft straying outside the prescribed air corridor. (CINCUSAFE /Wiesbaden/ to CS, AF /Washington/, No. EOOTA 13 093 /June 5, 1952/; SECRET.) Not only does this tend to rule out the likelihood that the MiG attack was the result of irresponsible action by "trigger-happy" Soviet pilots in an accidental encounter with the French plane; it also suggests, as another USAFE A-2 evaluation concluded, that the MiG attack was ordered and possibly directed by ground radar control. (See CINCUSAFE /Wiesbaden/ to CS, AF /Washington/, No. E1A1 12100 /May 10, 1952/; SECRET.)

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chief question in the minds of Western observers was whether the Soviets had staged the incident for "political" reasons, i.e., to further Soviet diplomatic objectives in the struggle for Germany, or whether the Soviet objective was merely a "technical" one, i.e., to discourage further Western air violations over Germany.

The major alternative explanations of the Soviet motive that were considered by Western analysts at the time were:

(a) The attack on the French plane was deliberate and had a political motive. It was not the irresponsible action of individual Soviet pilots who happened to be in the vicinity of the French plane. The Soviet objective was to test, by means of this air incident, Western strength and intentions before imposing further restrictions on Allied air traffic in and out of Berlin.[216]

(b) The Soviet action, deliberate and politically motivated, was designed to emphasize Soviet displeasure at the Western Allies' effort to integrate Western Germany into NATO, and to remind the Allies of the Soviet

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216 This explanation was suggested in a USAFE A-2 estimate, cited in CINCUSAFE (Wiesbaden) to CS, AF (Washington), No. EOOTA 13093 (June 5, 1952); SECRET. The same hypothesis was implicit in the State Department's suggestion, immediately after the incident took place, that for the sake of the effect on the Soviets, full Berlin air traffic be resumed by the Allies at the earliest moment consistent with safety. (State Department [Acheson] to HICOG-Bonn, April 29, 1952; SECRET.)

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capability for blockading Berlin.[217]

(c) The Soviet action was deliberate, but had a technical rather than a political motive. The Soviets staged the incident in order to teach the Western Allies a "lesson" and in order to discourage further air violations of this character.[218]

Political explanations of the Soviet motive can be ruled out for a variety of reasons:

1. A major reason for rejecting explanations (a) and (b), which attributed political or diplomatic objectives to the Soviet action, is that the French commercial airliner was apparently guilty of a fairly substantial violation of the air corridor, though in all probability it was unintentional.[219]

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217 A similar hypothesis appears, for example, in the State Department's Soviet Affairs for May, 1952, issued by OIR; SECRET. This analysis notes that the incident involving the French airliner took place at a time when the three Western powers were taking important steps toward the integration of West Germany. Following the delivery to the Western powers, on April 9, 1952, of a second Soviet note on this issue, a rash of incidents and bellicose statements were forthcoming from Soviet and East German sources. The attack on the French airliner was one of these incidents which, if not manufactured by the Soviets for this purpose, pointedly demonstrated to Western observers the Kremlin's ability to control access to Berlin.

218 This explanation was favored in a State Department report. (Berlin /Lyon/ to Secretary of State, No. 1298, May 1, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.)

219 While the three Western powers never admitted that the French plane had strayed from the corridor, a U.S. radar reading showed it to have been 8-10 miles south of the corridor at the time it was being forced down by the circling MiG's. The French pilot, however, asserted that his plane remained within the corridor throughout the entire engagement, the radar reading notwithstanding. The

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The fact that an air violation took place makes it necessary to consider more seriously explanations attributing technical motives to the Soviet action. It is interesting that the French Foreign Office initially attributed a political motive to the Soviet attack on the French airliner, its hypothesis being that the Soviets wished to indicate their opposition to the contractual agreements between the Western powers and the West German government. But within a few days the French came to the view that the Soviet attack, while deliberate, stemmed from technical motives.[220]

2. It is unlikely that the Soviets regarded the general political situation in Germany at this time as being suitable for beginning a new blockade of Berlin. According to a State Department analysis, there was no other evidence that the Soviets had made a general policy decision on Berlin which would call for a step as serious as that of shooting down an Allied plane in the authorized air corridor.[221] Such a challenge of the right of access to Berlin, the analysis noted, would be

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219 (Cont'd)

possibility remains that the French plane may have been forced out of the corridor, or further out than it might otherwise have strayed, by the maneuvers and attacks of the MiG's. (State cable, Bonn /McCloy/ to Secretary of State, unnumbered, April 29, 1952; RESTRICTED.)

220 State Department cable, Paris (Dunn) to Secretary of State, No. 6726 (May 2, 1952); SECRET.

221 HICOG, Berlin (Barnes) to Department of State, May 8, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.

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made only if the Soviets considered integration of West Germany with Western Europe to have become a probability. This was considered unlikely as yet by the State Department analyst, who noted, moreover, that the Soviets were continuing their "German Unity" campaign.

3. The fact that the whole incident was almost ignored in Soviet propaganda also argues in favor of the view that the Soviet motive was technical rather than political.[222] Apparently no effort was made by the Soviets, either by diplomatic communication or overt propaganda, to drive home the political meaning, if any, of the Soviet action. The incident of April 29 was followed, instead, by a series of Soviet diplomatic protests of similar air violations by French aircraft. These subsequent protests seemed intended to justify the Soviet action, but, in effect, they also clarified the Soviet intention. Thus, the Soviet protest of May 8 (regarding a new violation of the corridor by a French military plane) scored French authorities for failing to take corrective measures despite several remonstrances from the Soviet command. (The French reply of May 10 acknowledged that a brief violation had taken place in this instance.) Another Soviet note (May 15, 1952) protested a new violation by an Air France plane on May 12.[223]

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222 The Soviet note on the incident was reported in Soviet domestic news broadcasts, but otherwise the incident was ignored. (FBIS, Trends and Highlights or Moscow Broadcasts, April, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.)

223 See case studies Nos. 58 and 59.

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The explanation that seems most plausible to the present writer is that the Soviet action against the Air France plane had a technical motive. This hypothesis is favored not only because, as noted above, it is difficult to support political explanations. There are other indications which suggest that the incident resulted from a top-level Soviet decision to extend gradually the severe air-defense policy (first encountered in the Baltic on April 8, 1950) to other parts of the Soviet perimeter.

The terms used to describe the incident in Major General Trusov's note of April 29 recall the stereotyped version of the "facts" given in Soviet diplomatic notes on earlier air incidents, specifically the incidents of April 8, 1950, and November 6, 1951, in the Baltic and off Vladivostok. The stereotype implicitly conveys the content of Soviet air-defense policy itself. In the Baltic case of April 8, 1950, both the stereotyped version of the "facts" and, later, an explicit statement of Soviet air-defense instructions (or policy) were given in Soviet diplomatic notes. The connection between the stereotype and the policy was further strengthened by their repetition in the case of other air incidents which occurred after the Air France incident.[224] From the mere use of the stereotype, therefore, it could be inferred with some plausibility that the Soviet action in question was in implementation of the severe air-defense policy.

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224 See case study No. 66 and the RB-29 Hokkaido incident of October 7, 1952, in RM-1349-Supplement (TOP SECRET).

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In the Air France case, the essential component of the stereotype used in the Soviet note was the assertion that Soviet fighters ordered (signaled or requested) the French plane to land. This reflects the key requirement of Soviet air-defense policy; namely, that foreign planes suspected of intruding into Soviet air space are required to land at a Soviet airfield and "in case of resistance" are fired upon.

In the Air France case, the Soviets could not easily fabricate, as they did in earlier and later incidents, the charge that the foreign plane fired first, because the plane escaped destruction, and could have been shown to have been unarmed.

The fact that the French plane was not shot down appears to have raised the question of whether the Soviet intention (and Soviet air-defense policy in this geographical area) may have been limited to firing warning bursts only, some of which accidentally hit the French aircraft. This hypothesis was advanced at the time by the State Department.[225] It was supported by two observations: (1) the U.S. authorities in Berlin had had difficulty in finding a ranking Soviet official to whom to deliver their protest note of April 29, and (2) the Soviet note itself admitted only shooting across the front of the French plane. These two observations were linked together in the following hypothesis: Soviet officials in Berlin had been thrown off balance by the fact that the French plane was

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225 Berlin (Lyon) to Secretary of State, No. 1298 (May 1, 1952); CONFIDENTIAL.

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actually hit by the warning bursts. The incident was more serious than had been anticipated, and they wished to avoid discussing it until they had formulated a "line." Therefore, they contrived to be "not available" for awhile.

This hypothesis is of questionable plausibility, however, for several reasons:

1. The unavailability of Soviet officials, if intentional, may have been motivated by a desire to obtain detailed information on the incident from Soviet sources and to formulate the basis for the initial Soviet communication on the incident.

2. The Soviet statement that the MiG's fired only "warning bursts" at the French plane can hardly be taken as evidence of the true Soviet intention in this case. For it is not likely that, having failed to bring down the French plane (if they intended to), the Soviets would admit that they shot with the intention of hitting it. Even in cases when Soviet fighters have shot down "intruding" Western planes, Soviet diplomatic notes have employed euphemisms which suggest rather than directly indicate that Soviet fire was responsible for the plane's "disappearing in the direction of the sea."

3. The damage sustained by the French plane, according to a USAFE A-2 estimate, was sufficient proof that the Soviet fighters had intended to destroy it.[226]

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226 CINCUSAFE (Wiesbaden) to CS, AF (Washington), No. E00TA 13 093 (June 5, 1952); SECRET.

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Extension to Berlin Air Corridor of Tough Soviet Policy Toward Alleged Air Violations

The Soviet attempt to shoot down the Air France plane and the terms in which the Soviet diplomatic note described the action were the first indication -- and a strong one -- that the hostile air-defense policy governing violations of Soviet air space proper was being extended to the territory of the East German Satellite. This impression is further strengthened by the occurrence on October 8, 1952, of a similar incident involving a U.S. unmarked hospital aircraft.[227]

However, there is reason to believe that the Soviets intended to apply only a modified version of their air-defense policy to the Berlin air corridor. The four occupying powers had, in 1946, agreed on air-traffic regulations which ruled out resort to hostile fire against violations of the corridors.[228] Moreover, joint machinery for implementing these regulations and for hearing complaints had been provided in the Berlin Air Safety Center. Therefore, the introduction by the Soviets of a hostile air-defense policy in this area would have marked a sharp break from existing commitments and practices and, hence, would have offered a more difficult problem than had been raised by the introduction, in April, 1950, of the new, hostile air-defense policy around the U.S.S.R. proper. The problem for

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227 See case study No. 97.

228 These regulations are summarized in case study No. 97, q.v.

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the Soviets was further complicated by the fact that Western air traffic in the corridors was heavy and minor violations probably were not infrequent. Strict application of a hostile air-defense policy to all violations of the Berlin air corridors would have resulted in many incidents. Any such development could well have had potentially explosive international consequences.

The Soviets may well have deemed it prudent, therefore, to mesh any new and more hostile air-defense policy toward corridor violations with political considerations and strategy. For this reason, it is likely that in extending its severe air-defense policy to East Germany the Politburo modified it in at least two important respects:

(1) Soviet air-defense forces in East Germany may have been told to force down intruding planes only when they committed gross violations and, in such cases, to make a real effort to force the intruding plane to land without destroying it.[229]

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229 Available accounts indicate that, before resorting to hostile fire, Soviet fighters in this case may have tried by signaling and maneuvering to request and force the Air France plane to land. (The New York Times, April 29, 1952; State Department cable from Bonn (McCloy) to Secretary of State, unnumbered, April 29, 1952.) See also possible warning passes and signaling by Soviet MiG's in the hospital plane incident of October 8, 1952. In contrast, in incidents around the Soviet perimeter proper, Soviet fighters appear to have resorted to hostile fire immediately, without warning.

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(2) Provision may have been made for flexibility in operational implementation of the policy, in order to avoid taking hostile action in circumstances which would have undesired effects on political and diplomatic developments in this area.

From a political and diplomatic standpoint, the Air France incident should have been of major concern to the three Western occupying powers. For the incident gave the first indication that the Soviets were trying to apply a new and much more severe policy toward Western violations of the air corridors. The Soviets had threatened as much during the Berlin airlift, but they had not carried out their threat.[230] From a global standpoint, moreover, this appears to have been the first occasion on which the Soviets attempted to apply their severe air-defense policy to violations of communist air space other than that over Soviet territory proper.[231]

According to available information, none of the Western powers appears to have perceived clearly the significance of the Air France incident in this respect. No diplomatic effort was made to clarify whether, indeed, the Soviets were now claiming the right to force down planes which departed from the air corridor and to shoot them down if they refused to land in Soviet-held territory. It was not until the U.S. hospital

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230 See case study No. 27.

231 The downing of the U.S. plane in Hungary in November, 1951, does not provide as clear-cut a test of the extension of this air-defense policy to the territory of Soviet Satellites; see case study No. 54.

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aircraft incident some five months later that Allied officials attempted seriously to challenge the Soviets' right to apply such an air-defense policy in this area.[232]

Rather, the main objective of Allied diplomatic protests in the Air France case appears to have been to get the Soviets to admit legal responsibility for having damaged a plane which, the Allied held, had not violated the corridor. The only suggestion of a broader diplomatic objective which Allied authorities might have entertained, but one which they did not pursue until confronted by the hospital aircraft incident in October, 1952, was contained in the initial Allied note of April 29:

> To fire in any circumstances, even by way of warning, on an unarmed aircraft in time of peace, wherever that aircraft may be, is entirely inadmissible and contrary to all standards of civilized behavior.[233]

58. SOVIET PROTEST AGAINST FRENCH AIR VIOLATION OF BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR (May 8, 1952)

A Soviet protest of a French air violation of the Berlin corridor on May 8, 1952, was publicly disclosed by the East German news agency on May 9, 1952. The Soviet protest was

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232 See case study No. 97.

233 State Department cable, Berlin (Lyon) to Secretary of State, No. 1296 (April 30, 1952); CONFIDENTIAL. See also The New York Times, May 1, 1952.

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signed by Major General Trusov, deputy chief of staff of the Soviet occupation forces, and was directed to his counterpart, the French deputy chief of staff.

The Soviet note charged that a French aircraft of the type Beachcraft C-49 Voyageur departed from the air corridor north of the town of Erfurt at 12:08 local time on May 8, and flew over the towns of Soemmerdan, Merseburg, and Wittenberg, "which are at a considerable distance from the air corridor."

Major General Trusov's protest was reported to have emphasized that "the renewed violation of flying regulations by French aircraft over the territory of the German Democratic Republic showed that the French authorities, regardless of repeated demonstrations by representatives of the Soviet Command, in particular that of April 29, 1952, had taken no measures to stop these improper acts." The French occupation authorities, Trusov held, were fully responsible for the consequences of such acts.[234]

In a reply on May 10, 1952, French officials explained that the French plane had briefly swerved off course, but had immediately corrected its course.[235]

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234 FBIS monitoring service.

235 The New York Times, May 11, 1952. For significance, cf. case study No. 97.

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59. SOVIET PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED FRENCH AIR VIOLATION OF BERLIN CORRIDOR (May 12, 1952)

On May 15, 1952, Soviet authorities publicly announced that another French plane, a DC-4, had left the Berlin air corridor on May 12. It was also stated that Major General Trusov had sent a letter on the violation to French officials in Berlin, emphasizing once again that French authorities would be responsible for any consequences arising from any similar incidents.[236]

60. SOVIET PROTEST OF ALLEGED BRITISH VIOLATION OF BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR (May 18, 1952)

ADN, the official East German (Communist) news agency, reported on May 24, 1952, that Soviet officials in Berlin had protested a violation of the air corridor by a British plane on May 18.

The Soviet protest, signed by Major General Trusov, deputy chief of staff of Soviet occupation forces, held that the British plane (type unidentified in ADN dispatch) had violated the corridor "in the area of Ludwigslust" (Mecklenburg) and had overflown East Germany "for some time....considerably

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236 FBIS, Daily Report, May 16, 1952; The New York Times, May 16, 1952.

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off the permitted flight route." Trusov's protest was said to have called the attention of British authorities to the fact that "the responsibility for the consequences of such incidents" would rest upon them.[237]

61. BRITISH PROTEST SOVIET BUZZING OF CARGO PLANE IN NORTH BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR (May 22, 1952)

A British European Airways cargo aircraft was buzzed by a Soviet fighter (apparently on May 22, 1952) while flying the north air corridor to Berlin. No shots were fired, and no damage was incurred by the British plane.

The British made a routine protest to the Soviet controller at the Berlin Air Safety Center. The incident was not considered too unusual and, therefore, was not viewed with undue alarm.[238]

There is no indication that the incident received any publicity from either side. Nothing about the incident could be found in the New York Times.

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237 FBIS, Daily Report, May 26, 1952; brief account in The New York Times, May 25, 1952. For interpretation, see also case study No. 97.

238 Berlin (Lyon) to Secretary of State, No. 1154 (May 22, 1952); RESTRICTED.

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62. SOVIET PROTESTS AGAINST ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS OF EAST GERMAN TERRITORY (May 26 and June 7, 1952)

That the Soviet Command in Germany had protested U.S. air violations on May 26 and June 7, and warned against further occurrences of this sort, was apparently publicly disclosed only on June 22, 1952, in a Berlin radio broadcast.[239]

The disclosure was made in the context of a new protest on June 21, 1952, by Major General Chuikov, Soviet occupation chief.[240] Further details on the alleged violations of May 26 and June 7 are lacking. It is possible that U.S. Major General Mathewson's admission, on June 17, that a U.S. unmarked hospital plane had strayed from the corridor was in response to one of these earlier Soviet protests.[241]

63. SOVIET FIGHTERS BUZZ PLANE CARRYING U.S. HIGH COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRIA (June 4, 1952)

On June 4, 1952, while flying in an authorized Vienna air corridor, a U.S. plane carrying U.S. High Commissioner Donnelly was buzzed by two Soviet MiG's. The Soviet planes apparently did not fire their guns. On June 7, U.S. authorities in Vienna

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239 The New York Times, June 23, 1952.

240 See case study No. 68.

241 See case study No. 75. For significance of this incident, cf. case study No. 97.

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protested the incident to Soviet High Commissioner Sviridov. Soviet authorities admitted the buzzing, but held that the U.S. should have given advance notice of the flight.

The State Department advised the U.S. Embassy in Austria to give a strong answer to the Soviet request for advance notice for air corridor flights. "In view of the significance of the Soviet admission that their jets were near the Ambassador's plane and their renewed effort to restrict traffic on corridors, the Department believes that every effort should be made to publicize our strong position."[242]

On June 19, Acting U.S. High Commissioner in Austria Dowling rejected the Soviet proposal for notification of U.S. flights in Austria, citing existing agreements on the question.

64. ALBANIAN PROTEST OF ITALIAN AIR VIOLATIONS (June 5, 12, and 14, 1952)

An Albanian home service broadcast of July 2, 1952, stated that the Albanian government had protested violations of its air space by single Italian aircraft on June 5, 12, and 14. Circumstantial details of the overflights were given.

The Italian government was reminded "once again" of its responsibility for all consequences of "such a constant practice as this." Reference was made, too, to the intention to create

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[242] Department of State (Acheson) to American Embassy, Vienna, June 16, 1952.

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bases of aggression in the Balkans, "in the interests of the war-mongering Anglo-American imperialists."[243]

65. CHINESE COMMUNIST CHARGES OF FRENCH AIR VIOLATIONS ALONG INDOCHINA BORDER (June 6, 1952)

On June 6, 1952, the New China News Agency (Communist) charged French planes with strafing Chinese villages along the Sino-Vietnamese border, with resultant loss of life and property damage. The charges, elaborated in Radio Peking broadcasts on June 8, also alleged that French military aircraft were dropping supplies to "remnants of the Kuomintang troops operating on the Sino-Vietnamese border."

In rebroadcasting these charges, Moscow did not repeat Radio Peking's statement that "reasonable protests" had been made on several occasions by the Chinese People's government. Moscow accounts also omitted Peking's official threat that the "French Government must be held fully responsible for these air violations and the resultant losses in lives and property."[244]

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[243] FBIS, Daily Report, July 3, 1952. A slightly different version of what was apparently the same Albanian charge appeared in the New York Times of July 4, 1952.

[244] FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Broadcasts (11-24 June 1952); CONFIDENTIAL.

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66. SOVIETS SHOOT DOWN TWO SWEDISH AIRCRAFT OVER THE BALTIC[245] (June 13 and 16, 1952)

During a flight over the Baltic on June 13, a Swedish Air Force aircraft of the DC-3 type disappeared. An energetic search for the aircraft by sea and air started immediately. In the afternoon of the same day, Swedish military authorities requested the Finnish military attaché and the Soviet air attaché in Stockholm to communicate whatever information might be available in their countries regarding the missing Swedish DC-3. Finnish authorities stated that no such information was at their disposal. No reply was received from the Soviet authorities.

Later in the same day, June 13, because of unfavorable atmospheric conditions, one of two Swedish sea-rescue aircraft of the Catalina type participating in the search made an unintentional overflight of Soviet territory at the Island of Dagö. This was ascertained by Swedish officials only on June 17, upon interrogation of crews. On the same day, the Swedish Embassy in Moscow was instructed to inform appropriate Soviet authorities of the unintentional overflight. This message was transmitted on June 18, and formed the subject of a Swedish press release of the same date.

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245 For a summary of circumstantial details of the two incidents and a verbatim translation of all diplomatic notes exchanged during the controversy, see the Swedish blue book, Attacks upon Two Swedish Aircraft over the Baltic in June 1952: Documents Published by the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, New Series II:2, Stockholm, 1952.

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While continuing the search for the missing DC-3, another flight of two Swedish Catalinas was attacked by two Soviet MiG fighters northwest of Dagö in the early morning of June 16. One of the Swedish planes was pursued and hit several times, but it succeeded in making a forced landing in the immediate neighborhood of a West German vessel which was en route to Finland. The crew was rescued by the German vessel, but the plane sank.

These three incidents -- the loss of two Swedish planes on June 13 and 16, and the overflight of Dagö by another Swedish plane on June 13 -- became the subject of a series of diplomatic exchanges between the Swedish and Soviet governments. Most of the key facts surrounding the loss of the two Swedish planes were disputed by the two governments, and the diplomatic controversy was not resolved.

Though it acknowledged the unintentional violation of Soviet territory, the Swedish government maintained that neither of its two other planes had violated Soviet territory or territorial waters.

The Swedish government held that both of the missing planes had been unarmed. With regard to the one shot down on June 16, therefore, the Swedish government rejected the Soviet contention that this plane had opened fire upon Soviet fighters when requested by them to land.

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The Soviets refused to accept explicit responsibility for the fatality involving the Swedish DC-3 on June 13. The Soviet note on this incident did not allege that the Swedish plane had opened fire. The Soviets stated merely that on June 13 "two [sic] foreign aircraft" whose nationality could not be ascertained owing to unfavorable atmospheric conditions violated the Soviet frontier "in the region of Ventspils" and "were driven off by Soviet aircraft."

The Soviet government never directly acknowledged that the aircraft involved in the June 13 incident was the missing Swedish DC-3. It persistently maintained that the identity of the "two foreign planes" involved at that time was not known by the Soviet defense forces. There is little doubt, however, that the Soviets were responsible for the shooting down of the DC-3.

The Swedish account of the June 13 incident referred to only one Swedish plane in that area. Therefore, the accounts of the incident put out by the two governments differed on the number of planes involved. This discrepancy, perhaps unimportant, was not singled out for attention by either government.

None of the eight-man crew of the Swedish DC-3 survived, and, so far as is known, authoritative details of the mishap are lacking.

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Significance

Soviet Motives

There is reason to believe that the Soviet motive in shooting down two Swedish planes within a matter of four days was not necessarily the same in both cases. The explanation for the second incident, involving the Catalina search-plane, is more readily established than the circumstances and motivation of the first incident, involving the DC-3. The second incident was the direct aftermath of the first incident, though it was not necessarily connected with it in Soviet planning. It will be useful at this point to evaluate alternative explanations of the Soviet motive behind the initial incident.

(1) There is little ground for believing that the June 13 incident was accidental, i.e., the result of a "trigger-happy" Soviet pilot who happened to be in the area. This hypothesis has never figured seriously in discussions of the case. It is generally agreed that the attack was deliberate -- i.e., the result of Soviet policy -- and the intelligence problem has been to establish whether the Soviets had a political or technical motive and, more precisely, what motive.[246]

(2) Among possible political motives for the attack, the following have been considered: (a) the two Soviet actions against the Swedish planes might have been intended to remind the Swedes of their close proximity to the U.S.S.R., and to

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[246] Parts of the report of the investigation of the incidents by the Swedish Air Accidents Commission, it was noted,

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discourage incipient Swedish moves toward modification or abandonment of Sweden's traditional neutrality policy; (b) the incidents may have been intended by the Soviets to offset the Enbom spy case, which was coming to a close in Sweden at just this time and which had deeply implicated Soviet Embassy officials; thus, the air incidents would "show" that the Swedes, too, were "spying" on the Soviets by means of air reconnaissance.

The international context in which the air incidents occurred at first lent a certain plausibility to these explanations of the Soviet motive, and they were seriously considered by the Swedish government for a time.[247] The Soviet government could well have found reason to be displeased with recent Swedish moves which might be taken as indicative of a move away from strict neutrality. Thus, as The Economist observed in its issue of July 12, 1952, a high officer of the Swedish Air Force and the Swedish premier had both been to the United States, and, at the beginning of June, a British submarine flotilla visited Stockholm and was followed a few days later by a senior RAF officer.

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were to remain classified for the time being, for use, possibly, if the case were submitted to international adjudication. (American Embassy, Stockholm /Marshall Green/ to Department of State, No. 17 /July 8, 1952/; RESTRICTED.)

247 Stockholm (Butterworth) to Secretary of State, No. 1464 (June 17, 1952); SECRET.

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Within a relatively short time after the incidents occurred, however, the Swedish government was disposed to reject these early hypotheses. Political interpretations of the Soviet intention were regarded as dubious, in part because Soviet diplomatic and propaganda handling of the incidents did not seem designed to support a political motive. There was little evidence, apart from the two air incidents themselves, to suggest that the Soviets were now inaugurating a new stage in their relations with the Swedish government. The defensive tone of Soviet diplomatic and propaganda communications on the incidents and, particularly, the insistence of the Soviets that action had been taken on June 13 against unidentified foreign aircraft pointed to the absence of a deliberate Politburo intention to create an incident with the Swedish government or the Swedish public. The Swedish Foreign Office is reported to have been impressed with the fact that the Soviets were not playing upon the incidents politically, and to have noted particularly the relative silence maintained by the Soviet propaganda machine.[248]

A political motive behind the initial incident could not be conclusively ruled out because the possibility remained that the Kremlin had miscalculated the extent to which such an incident would arouse Swedish opinion. According to this theory, the Politburo indeed wanted to intimidate the Swedes by shooting down

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248 American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State; No. 9 (July 3, 1952); SECRET.

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one of their planes, but had not foreseen the extent of national anger which such an incident would arouse. In considering this hypothesis, however, the Swedish Foreign Office was perplexed as to why the Kremlin should now suddenly act contrary to its recent policy of placating Sweden in order to promote the concept of Swedish neutrality. The only answer which suggested itself was that the Soviets were attempting to promote Swedish neutralism by a simultaneous or alternating application of intimidation and placation.[249]

On balance, however, the Swedish government tended to attribute a technical motive to the Soviet action.

(3) The fact that the Soviets referred to two foreign planes of undetermined nationality aroused speculation about whether a plane other than the Swedish DC-3 might also have been in the vicinity at the time. The other foreign plane may have been the sole intended target of Soviet action. There was the further possibility, considered at the time, that Soviet air defense might have quite naturally mistaken the silhouette of the Swedish DC-3 for an American plane.

Following a query by the Swedish government, USAF and the U.S. Navy reported that none of their planes had been in the vicinity at the time of the incident.[250] The possibility

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249 American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State; No. 9 (July 3, 1952); SECRET.

250 USAF Memorandum, Col. George A. Blakey, USAF State Liaison Officer, to Mr. Andreas G. Ronhovde (Officer-in-Charge, Northern European Affairs, State Department), September 8, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.

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remains, however, that there was a mistaken identification of silhouette.

It is possible, of course, that only one foreign aircraft was really identified by the Soviet air defense and that the reference to "two foreign aircraft" was contrived in the Soviet note of June 24 for some special reason. It might be that the Soviets, chagrined at learning later that the "American" DC-3 turned out to be a Swedish plane, contrived the reference to "two foreign aircraft" of unidentified nationality in order to cover up their mistake and to soften the unintended impact of the incident upon Swedish sensibilities.

Another hypothesis, preferred by the present author, is that the Soviets indeed intended to shoot down the Swedish DC-3 and contrived the story about two unidentified foreign aircraft for purposes of "cover" or diplomatic deception. The Kremlin may have calculated that, if the circumstances under which the DC-3 disappeared did not remain a mystery and the Soviets began to be implicated, then a story about two unidentified aircraft could be released. This version of the "facts" would spare the Soviet government full onus by raising the possibility that its intended target had been another foreign plane. Indirectly supporting this hypothesis is the fact that the Soviet government ignored all Swedish inquiries regarding the DC-3, missing since June 13, until the Swedish note of June 22 announced specific evidence (based upon examination of bits of

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the wreckage) that the DC-3 had been fired upon. It was only then, in its third note of the series, on June 24, that the Soviet government referred for the first time to the initial incident. Had the Swedes not acquired evidence that the DC-3 had been the victim of hostile action, the Soviets might never have acknowledged, even indirectly, their responsibility for shooting it down.

The Soviet delay in disclosing its role in the June 13 incident need not have been due to prearranged calculation; it may have been in response to fortuitous circumstances. The possibility cannot be excluded that the Soviets decided to withhold information about their role after noting that the Swedes were initially disposed to regard the loss of the DC-3 as accidental. (The initial Swedish announcement on June 14 had mentioned the possibility that a spontaneous explosion of the DC-3 had taken place. Privately, however, Swedish government sources believed that the DC-3 had probably been shot down, though they may have lacked conclusive evidence of this at the time.)[251]

(4) The fact that the Soviet Baltic fleet was holding secret maneuvers somewhere in the southeastern Baltic at the time when the June 13 incident took place suggested another hypothesis as to the Soviet motive.

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[251] Stockholm (Butterworth) to Secretary of State, No. 1464 (June 17, 1952); SECRET.

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On July 12, 1952, The Economist suggested that the Soviets "might well have been so suspicious of any foreign aircraft that stumbled into -- or was sent to investigate -- their maneuvers that they shot it down, particularly if it had an 'American' silhouette and the visibility was rather poor...."

The Swedish government, of course, considered this possibility very seriously but did not appear to be entirely satisfied with it. The explanation would be a very good one if the DC-3 had in fact been sent close to or over the area of Soviet maneuvers; we may assume that the Swedish government knew where these maneuvers were being held. But the DC-3 was evidently not sent into this part of the Baltic. Swedish government sources indicated privately to U.S. Embassy officials that the only possibility considered by them was that the DC-3 accidentally strayed into the Soviet maneuver area. Even this possibility does not seem to have been deemed very likely by Swedish officials, who considered it more probable that the Soviets went out of their way to intercept the DC-3.[252] As officially and publicly announced by the Swedish government, the flight plan of the DC-3 would have taken it around the southern tip of the Swedish island of Gotland.

Other evidence bearing on this possible explanation is inconclusive. Little can be made of the fact that there was

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252 Swedish officials stated that they did not know exactly where the DC-3 had been attacked, but concluded from the preponderance of evidence that Soviet planes went out of their way to intercept this plane either near Swedish territory, or at least clearly over international waters. (American Embassy, Stockholm /Butterworth/ to Department of State, No. 9 /July 3, 1952/; SECRET.)

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no reference to Soviet naval maneuvers in the Baltic in the Soviet diplomatic or propaganda communications. The fact that a Finnish communist paper, cited by The Economist on July 12, 1952, stated that the Swedes got what they deserved for trespassing on a Russian "training area" is no more than suggestive since it might be based on inference rather than on special information as to what actually took place.

Soviet reluctance to disclose the circumstances and details of its military counteraction against the DC-3 may also be taken as an indication supporting the above hypothesis. For, if indeed the DC-3 wandered over the international waters of the Baltic where secret Soviet naval maneuvers were being held, Soviet unwillingness to give any details would be understandable. It is noteworthy that, while claiming a violation of the Soviet frontier on June 13, the Soviet note of June 24 was singularly uncommunicative regarding the extent of the alleged penetration in kilometers. (In contrast, the precise distance of the alleged penetration by the Swedish Catalina on June 16 was given in the Soviet protest.) Nor did the Soviet account specify the locus of the alleged violation of June 13 beyond stating that it took place "in the region of Ventspils." The means by which the alleged violation by the DC-3 was detected, too, were left vague in the Soviet account (but not so in the Soviet version regarding the Swedish Catalina incident of June 16). Thus, the Soviet note of June 24 merely stated, with

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regard to the "two foreign aircraft" (i.e., Swedish DC-3): "On the basis of control measures undertaken by competent authorities, the /Soviet Foreign/ Ministry states that a violation of the Soviet frontier was committed....The said aircraft were driven off by Soviet aircraft." This formulation, it may be noted, is sufficiently general to include almost any type of detection and interception.

The peculiar Soviet reticence regarding the circumstances of the June 13 incident, however, would equally well support another hypothetical explanation of the Soviet motive.

(5) The Soviet attack on the DC-3 on June 13 may have been a deliberate attempt to eliminate a specially-equipped plane and a highly-trained crew. This hypothesis was favored by the Swedish Foreign Office as an explanation of the Soviet motive.[253]

U.S. Embassy officers in Stockholm were privately informed that the Swedish DC-3 was carrying radar or other special eqipment. No public announcement of this was made. Evidently the specially-equipped DC-3 had earlier engaged in intelligence missions. It was assumed by Swedish authorities that the Soviets knew that the craft was being used for radar reconnaissance of Soviet installations.

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253 American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State, No. 9 (July 3, 1952); SECRET.

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Available data are contradictory on whether the DC-3 was engaged on a radar reconnaissance mission when it was shot down.[254] Whether the specially-equipped DC-3 was actually on an intelligence mission on this occasion or, as officially stated, on a training mission is an item of information relevant for purposes of establishing the Soviet plan for shooting it down and, perhaps, their method of detection. But it does not appear to affect the hypothesis that the Soviet motive was to intercept and destroy this plane.

The possibility that the Soviets deliberately went out of their way to shoot down the DC-3 over international waters is indirectly suggested by the diplomatic language employed in the Soviet note of June 24. Although explicitly claiming a violation of Soviet territory "in the region of Ventspils," the note

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254 The Embassy cable from Butterworth (Stockholm) implies that the DC-3 was on such a mission on June 13, 1952. However, a U.S. Air Force report from Stockholm--which reported that the DC-3 in question had radar and/or VHF monitoring equipment, and also noted that the Swedish Air Force had made several such flights in the past without incident--stated that "considering the time of day and route followed, see no reason to doubt Royal Swedish Air Force statement to the undersigned that the aircraft was making a routine training flight." (USAIRA, Stockholm, signed /REW/ to C/S AF /Washington, D.C./, No. Air-68 /June 18, 1952/; SECRET.) It may be noted, too, that in a news dispatch from Stockholm (Chicago Daily News, July 17, 1952), William H. Stoneman claimed that the Swedish had admitted that the DC-3 was loaded with modern radio equipment, but had denied it was carrying radar. Stoneman also reported that the DC-3 carried six top-notch Swedish radio experts.

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conspicuously failed to employ its usual diplomatic stereotype of the "facts" of an air incident.[255] The significance of the omission is clear if it is recalled that the stereotype has been used both before and after the DC-3 to intimate that the Soviet government took public responsibility for what it regarded as legitimate defensive action against a hostile air encroachment against the Soviet border. The Soviet government's failure to use the stereotype in this case may even have been designed as an indirect reassurance to the Swedish government that the action against the DC-3 was of an unusual character, and that it did not inaugurate a practice of going out of the way to shoot down Swedish planes flying over international waters.

If the DC-3 were indeed on a training mission, and were keeping relatively close to Swedish territory, this would suggest that the Soviet action against it was the result of a special plan designed to take advantage of this fact. The ill-fated training flight took place in daylight whereas, presumably, intelligence missions of this type are usually undertaken at night or under the cover of heavy overcast in order to decrease vulnerability to enemy countermeasures. It is possible,

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255 It will be recalled that, in previous incidents of this type, Soviet protest notes always stated that the foreign aircraft caught in an air violation was armed, refused instructions to land, fired first, and then was fired upon by Soviet aircraft. A similar stereotype was used in protesting the June 16 alleged violation of Dagö by the Swedish Catalina whichwas shot down. In its account of the June 13 incident, however, the Soviet note did not claim that the "two foreign aircraft" were armed, that they were asked to land, and that they were fired upon by Soviet aircraft only after being fired upon.

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therefore, that a special operation was devised by Soviet authorities to destroy the plane whose special characteristics and intelligence operations, we are told, were known to them on an occasion, i.e., the daylight training flight, when detection and interception would be easier.

The possibility of a special Soviet operation in this case is suggested by the cautious and reticent disclosure policy which the Soviets subsequently followed. It is also supported by an estimate recently advanced by Swedish intelligence that the DC-3 was shot down not by the regular Soviet Air Force but by planes under the control of the Soviet MGB.[256] One basis for this view was said to be that in speeches before the Bolshevik Party Congress held in Moscow during October, 1952, the incident was referred to by Beria, who controlled the MGB, but by none of the Soviet generals.[257]

On the other hand, even if the MGB's role in the affair could be plausibly inferred, this would not necessarily indicate

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256 Moscow (Beam) to Secretary of State, No. 312 (January 28, 1953); CONFIDENTIAL. The source was the counsellor of the Swedish Embassy who, prior to his departure for Stockholm, mentioned in confidence that his government had made a study of this possibility.

257 An inspection of Beria's speech to the 19th Party Congress, however, reveals no mention of any specific air incident, though he did refer to "the demonstrative, brazen provocations and ventures by the American military against the U.S.S.R....the activity of the American Air Force on the western and eastern borders of the U.S.S.R...." For a translation of the Beria speech, which appeared in full text in Pravda, October 9, 1942, see Leo Gruilow (ed.), Current Soviet Policies, 1953, pp. 161-166.

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a special operation, for the MGB apparently had standing responsibilities for border security.

(6) Closely related to the preceding hypothesis is another explanation of the Soviet motive behind the DC-3 incident. According to this theory, also considered by the Swedish government,[258] the Soviets shot down the DC-3 as a direct warning to Sweden to keep its reconnaissance planes out of the eastern Baltic. That the Soviets are specially sensitive to foreign intrusions into this area is well known, and the reasons for it are obvious. Elsewhere around the Soviet periphery, the U.S.S.R. is protected by Satellites, deserts, mountains, and tundra, but the Baltic Sea washes Soviet shores close to the heart of Russia. Dagö, the scene of the second incident involving the Swedish Catalina, commands the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and the DC-3 shot down on June 13 was flying not far from the Latvian coast, where new Soviet vessels are tested.[259]

(7) With regard to motive behind the shooting down of the Catalina search plane on June 16, Swedish authorities were disposed to regard it as a local implementation of general standing orders for dealing with unfriendly intruders.[260]

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258 Swedish Foreign Office officials cited in American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State, No. 9 (July 3, 1952); SECRET.

259 Ibid.

260 Ibid.

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However, Swedish authorities thought that the decision to shoot down the DC-3 must have been taken in Moscow, and only after the political factors and consequences were taken into account.

A weighing of these various possibilities suggests that, while the shooting down of the DC-3 probably had one or more "technical" motives -- (5) and/or (7), above -- the possibility cannot be ruled out that a political motive, (2), was also operative.

Swedish Handling of the Incidents

Perceiving, in the two incidents, a possible challenge to Sweden's right of free flight over the international waters of the Baltic, the Swedish government reacted forcefully to make it known that it would not accept such a limitation. Immediately following the shooting down of the Catalina search plane on June 16, the Swedish government announced that the search would continue under the protection of armed pursuit planes.[261]

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261 That the Swedish government was not intimidated by the Soviet actions was made plain, too, in connection with the annual Swedish naval, air, and coast guard maneuvers which began the following month, July, 1952. "Sweden has already informed Moscow that it regards the Baltic Sea as free to be used by all nations, and the Swedish forces are under orders to return fire if the Soviets attempt to interfere with them. The Swedish maneuvers are thus a challenge to any Soviet effort to convert the Baltic Sea into a Russian lake...." (The New York Times, July 19, 1952.) In their autumn war games in the Baltic in 1953, Swedish planes and naval craft were reported to have carried live ammunition and to have been under orders to fire in case of interference, in order to insure against a repetition of the June, 1952, incidents. (The New York Times, September 21, 1953.)

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The major objective of Sweden's diplomatic policy in subsequent exchanges was to support this determination to insist upon its rights over the Baltic. The effort to bring the Soviet government to account for its actions, while pursued vigorously, was nonetheless a subsidiary objective of Swedish diplomacy and was not allowed to obscure the fundamental Swedish national interest in the matter. The circumspection with which Soviet notes on the incidents avoided challenging the right of free flight over international waters was evidently not lost upon the Swedish government, for it pointedly asserted this right as being one which the Soviet government itself conceded:

> Swedish military aircraft are, of course, entirely free to fly over the free sea and will in the future, as hitherto, make use of this right. Soviet military forces cannot any more than the military forces of any other country exercise sovereignty over aircraft of another nationality in such waters. From the three communications of the /Soviet/ Ministry for Foreign Affairs the Swedish Government finds it clear that this view is shared by the Soviet Government.[262]

In its next note (July 16, 1952), the Soviet government stated with reference to the preceding passage that it was not "necessary to enter into a discussion of the statement...as the Soviet Government has never disputed this right...." Thus, the Soviets were maneuvered into making a public acknowledgment of Swedish rights. And, to signal the fact that an explicit

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[262] Swedish note of July 1, 1952.

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and sweeping commitment on this point had been obtained from the Soviets, the next Swedish note (August 5) opened as follows:

> The Swedish Government takes note of the statement under point 4 in the note of the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to the effect that the Soviet Union has never denied that Swedish military aircraft are entirely free to fly over the free sea. The Swedish Government presumes that the instructions in force for the Soviet armed forces are in accordance herewith.

This assurance was one which could be publicly presented as a Swedish diplomatic "success," and this was done by Swedish Prime Minister Erlander at the time.

The full significance of Sweden's determination to continue unrestricted its flights over the international waters of the Baltic was evident, however, only to those who were aware of Sweden's strategic intelligence requirements and its policy of air reconnaissance of the Soviet coast in the Baltic. In insisting upon free flights over international waters, the Swedish government was implicitly insisting upon the right to conduct unhampered intelligence reconnaissance of Soviet coasts so long as boundary limits were observed. The Swedish action in this case is the strongest defense yet made by a Western power of the right to use international air space for purposes of perimeter reconnaissance.

The Swedish government considers it vitally necessary, in case of a Russian attack, to have adequate advance warning. They must be able to detect any Soviet offensive build-up on

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the other side of the Baltic. For this purpose, various types of air reconnaissance over East Baltic waters have been made over a period of time.[263] This is the reason for Swedish determination to continue its program of aerial reconnaissance, a determination that was conveyed to U.S. Embassy officers in Stockholm following the two incidents in question.[264] The decision to arm or escort Swedish reconnaissance planes was evidently taken at this time. Interestingly, it was felt by the Swedish Foreign Office that this step would actually minimize risks of Soviet attacks on Swedish planes, even though a relaxation of tension was hardly to be expected in view of the forthcoming appearance of armed Swedish planes in the sensitive East Baltic region.[265]

Noteworthy in this case is the Swedish government's assumption that its air-reconnaissance operations are a perfectly legitimate use of the right to free flights over international waters. Noticeably absent in the forceful Swedish diplomatic handling of the two incidents and in the skillful assertion of the right of free flight is any sense of embarrassment over the fact that matters of secret intelligence and air reconnaissance

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263 An authoritative, highly placed Swedish Foreign Office official cited in American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State, No. 39 (July 10, 1952); SECRET.

264 Ibid. See also memo of conversation with Swedish Ambassador Boheman by Mr. U. Alexis Johnson (FE) and Mr. William Sale (EUR) of the State Department, dated June 23, 1952; SECRET.

265 Ibid. Information on subsequent developments in Swedish air reconnaissance has not been available for the present study.

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were really at stake. Though not publicizing this fact, neither did the Swedish government seem to feel handicapped diplomatically by what might be regarded by some as a morally or legally tenuous position. Such lack of embarrassment when dealing with Soviet challenges to perimeter reconnaissance of its borders would seem to be incumbent upon Western policy-makers also.

Failing to obtain satisfaction for the shooting down of two of its planes through bilateral diplomatic channels, the Swedish government proposed to the Soviets that resort be had to international arbitration. This request was turned down on the ground that such a procedure was not needed for the examination of questions connected with encroachments on the Soviet Union's frontiers. Thereupon, despite considerable domestic pressure, the Swedish government decided against submitting the case to the United Nations. An important consideration was the belief that to have recourse to the U.N. might involve Sweden in the East-West controversy and perhaps lead the Soviets to counter-charge Swedish collaboration with the West and spying upon the U.S.S.R.[266]

Soviet Diplomatic and Propaganda Handling of Incident

Attention has already been directed to aspects of the Soviet handling of the DC-3 incident which support one or another of

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266 American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State, No. 9 (July 3, 1952); SECRET; Department of State (Bruce) to American Embassy, Prague (October 24, 1952); SECRET.

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the possible explanations of Soviet motives. But the overall Soviet diplomatic and propaganda handling of the two incidents deserves a fuller examination.

In the weeks following the incidents, Soviet Ambassador to Sweden Rodionov was reported to have been more ingratiating than usual in conversations with Swedish officials. Rodionov accepted the first Swedish protest in the mildest manner, merely stating that the Soviet Air Force was under strictest instructions not to attack Swedish planes over international waters. In accepting the second Swedish note, Rodionov contented himself with saying that "Mr. Vishinsky cannot be wrong," but in such a way as to convey to the acting Swedish foreign minister the suggestion that he did not wholly approve of the attitude adopted by the Soviet government in the reply under discussion.[267]

The Soviet notes themselves were moderate in tone and in the claims advanced. They were clearly intended to minimize affront to Swedish sensibilities and to forego any challenge to Swedish air rights over the Baltic. The Soviet action against the Catalina search plane was pointedly depicted as resulting only from implementation of a general Soviet policy for air defense of its borders, and there was an explicit acknowledgment of Sweden's right of free flight over international waters. Soviet air-defense policy was held to be no

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267 As reported in American Embassy, Stockholm (Butterworth) to Department of State, No. 9 (July 3, 1952); SECRET.

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more than that which any state adopts in defense of its sovereignty. In its second note (June 19), as if to soften the impact of its recent action in shooting down Swedish planes, the Soviet government drew attention to the fact that it had treated earlier Swedish air violations of Soviet territory with forebearance, having contented itself at the time with calling the violations to the attention of the Swedish government.[268] The third Soviet note (June 24) drew attention to the "characteristic fact" that Soviet aircraft never violated the frontiers of other states. Perhaps to emphasize that Soviet air-defense policy and actions were not aimed exclusively or even predominantly at the Swedes, the same Soviet note added that several cases had occurred earlier when violation of the Soviet frontier took place by foreign aircraft, "among them also Swedish aircraft." Finally, the Soviet note of October 8 took up the Swedish charge that the Soviet government had not co-operated in clarifying the circumstances of the initial loss of the DC-3, which indeed it had not. The Soviet reply, while not a convincing one, nonetheless conveyed a certain sensitivity to the charge.

It may be recalled that, even when wishing to take public responsibility and credit for what it regards as a legitimate air-defense action, the Soviet government uses a diplomatic

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[268] See case study No. 47.

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stereotype which does not explicitly acknowledge that the intruding aircraft was hit by Soviet fire. The Soviet phrasing is that its planes "return" fire whereupon the foreign plane "disappears in the direction of the sea." But in the case of the Swedish DC-3, lost on June 13, the Soviets appear to have been still more reluctant to take overt responsibility for having inflicted damage on the aircraft. Thus, the Soviet note of June 24 did not even state that the intruding "foreign aircraft" had been fired upon by Soviet planes; they were merely "driven off."

Nor would the Soviets accept the implication, made by the Swedish government in its note of July 1, that the action against unidentified foreign aircraft finally admitted by the Soviets must have involved the Swedish DC-3. In its reply, the Soviet government explicitly rejected this charge and merely reiterated that "the nationality of said aircraft was not ascertained owing to mist and unfavorable atmospheric conditions." Thus, the Kremlin made it plain that it was unwilling to discuss the June 13 incident at all, and Soviet news and propaganda maintained strict silence on this incident.

Soviet propaganda commentary on the Swedish plane incidents was restrained both in quantity and in tone. In contrast to the earlier Baltic incident involving a U.S. Navy plane, there was no effort to blow up these incidents into a prestige "victory" for Soviet arms and defensive preparedness. Soviet

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commentary was factual rather than hortatory, and implicitly justificatory rather than belligerent. This commentary took the form of two interviews with the chief of staff of the Soviet Naval Air Force, Lt. General A. M. Shuginin, in which Shuginin painstakingly attempted to pick flaws in the circumstantial investigation of the incidents conducted by the Accidents Commission of the Swedish Air Force.[269]

The use of a responsible, high-ranking military officer to refute the Swedish account indicates a desire to keep discussion of the incidents above a purely propaganda plane, and to justify authoritatively the diplomatic position taken by the Soviets in the matter. Apart from a reference to the possible reconnaissance purpose of the Swedish flights and an allusion, in this context, to their apparent similarity to reconnaissance flights in the Baltic by American aircraft in 1950, Lt. General Shuginin did not add substantially to the official diplomatic position enunciated in the Soviet notes. It is noteworthy that the two Shuginin interviews focused exclusively on the second incident, involving the Catalina; the first incident, involving the DC-3, was ignored by him and by Soviet propaganda generally.

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269 The interviews were published in Krasny Flot on July 18 and September 30, 1952.

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Swedish Challenge of Soviet Air-Defense Policy

During the exchange of diplomatic communications, the Soviets held that their air-defense policy was the same as that which all other states had adopted in defense of sovereignty.[270] As a matter of fact, the Soviets were vulnerable precisely on this point, in that their stated air-defense policy was significantly more severe than that of some other powers.

Seeking to score a diplomatic point, the Swedish government at this time contacted most of the Western European governments to find out what were the prevailing practices regarding warning in the case of overflights by foreign planes. None of the governments canvassed had published regulations on this point. Accordingly, the Swedish government had to confine itself to citing its own air-defense instructions in challenging the contention that the Soviet method of dealing with Swedish planes had been in accordance with standard international practice.[271]

The Swedish government pointed out that its own regulations permitted a foreign aircraft caught in a border violation to turn away after a warning, i.e., the foreign aircraft was not fired upon if it changed its course and flew away. In contrast, instructions to Soviet air-defense forces stipulated that a

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270 "The /Foreign/ Ministry /of the U.S.S.R./ finds it likewise necessary to recall to mind the instructions in force in the Soviet Union as in all other States to the effect that, if a foreign aircraft violates the State frontier and if a foreign aircraft penetrates into the territory of anotner Power, it is the duty of the airmen of the State concerned to force such aircraft to land on a local airfield and, in case of resistance, to open fire on it." (Soviet note of June 24, 1952.)

271 American Embassy, Stockholm (Marshall Green) to Department of State, No. 17 (July 18, 1952); RESTRICTED.

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foreign aircraft caught in a violation was to be asked to land at a Soviet airfield and be fired upon if, instead of landing, it attempted to leave Soviet territory.[272] Confronted with this explicit challenge to its air-defense policy, the Soviet government pretended not to see the difference between its own and the Swedish air-defense instructions.[273]

Though its challenge remained without immediate effect, the Swedish government's diplomatic action on this occasion may have stimulated the Western powers to join efforts for countering the more rigid and severe aspects of Soviet air-defense policy. Following the Swedish lead, the U.S. Department of State has

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272 Swedish notes of July 1 and August 5, 1952. To its note of July 1, the Swedish government appended a summary of Swedish air-defense regulations; the relevant portions are as follows:

"1. Individual aircraft which without permission fly in over Swedish territory shall be turned off by means of a warning. If the aircraft does not change its course away from Swedish territory, effective fire shall be opened.
The warning is given
from aircraft: by warning shots
from antiaircraft batteries and warships: by means of warning shots fired, if possible, at least 600 meters ahead of the aircraft.
An aircraft which is obviously in distress or which, by signals and/or maneuvers, clearly indicates that it wishes to land is, if possible, given directions where to land.

"2. An aircraft which, with obviously hostile intentions, commits an act of violence against targets within Swedish territory, and groups of aircraft over Swedish territory, shall be met with force of arms, without preceding warning." (Swedish blue book, op. cit., p. 28; also quoted in Lissitzyn, op. cit., pp. 575-576.)

273 Soviet note of July 16, 1952.

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explored the possibility of formulating a standard code of international practice which would govern, and presumably limit, air-defense action in such cases.[274]

Change in Swedish Air-Defense Policy

Prior to the June, 1952 air incidents, the Swedish government was uniformly lenient toward foreign overflights of Swedish territory. An informal protest would be made after the event to representatives of the government whose plane had violated Swedish territory. Until that time, there were apparently no cases in which foreign planes making unauthorized flights over Sweden had been intercepted, forced to land, or driven off. In fact, while navigational aid was sometimes given to such planes, it does not appear that any attempt was even made to notify the aircraft in question that it was making an unauthorized overflight.[275]

Following the June incidents, the Swedish government informally indicated to the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm that it would henceforth act to prevent unauthorized overflights by "unfriendly" (Soviet) planes. It strongly hinted that armed Swedish fighters would be used to drive off such planes, or force them to land.[276]

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274 Department of State circular airgram, October 20, 1952, Control 1874; CONFIDENTIAL.

275 American Embassy, Stockholm (Ware Adams) to Department of State, No. 401 (October 30, 1952); CONFIDENTIAL.

276 Ibid.

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Thus, if the Swedish intention were carried out and an opportunity presented itself, a "reprisal" for the June incidents might be forthcoming.

The earlier lenient Swedish air-defense policy remained in force in the case of "friendly" overflights. The Swedish government, however, did not wish the differentiation in its policy to become public.[277]

67. HUNGARIAN PROTEST AGAINST YUGOSLAV AIR VIOLATIONS (June 13 and 25, 1952)

Shortly after the Yugoslav protests of Hungarian air violations on June 24 and 25,[278] the Hungarian government made countercharges against the Yugoslav government. In a note dated June 28 and broadcast on the same day, the Hungarians accused the Yugoslavs of forty-eight "provocative frontier violations" during the previous few months.

Included in the charges were alleged overflights by Yugoslav planes on June 13 and 25. The Hungarian broadcast noted that the Yugoslav government had not replied to an earlier Hungarian protest against more than two hundred frontier incidents, and had taken no steps to curb the excesses of its frontier guards.

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277 American Embassy, Stockholm (Ware Adams) to Department of State, No. 401 (October 30, 1952); CONFIDENTIAL.

278 See case study No. 71.

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These frontier violations, "constantly recurring and ever more frequent," according to the Hungarian broadcast, bore testimony "to the fact that the Yugoslav government is resolved further to stimulate the hostile atmosphere against Hungary."[279]

68. SOVIET PROTEST OF TWO ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS OF EAST GERMANY (June 19, 1952)

ADN, the official (communist) East German news agency, reported on June 22, 1952, that Major General Chuikov, Soviet occupation chief, had protested two more air violations by U.S. planes. Both of the alleged violations were said to have taken place on June 19:

> A four-engined U.S. C-54 transport was charged with having flown across the demarcation line at Hasenthal at 05:00, and with having overflown Ilmenau, Ohrdorf, Eisenach, Heiligenstadt, and Teistungen.
>
> A single-engine U.S. plane was charged with having twice crossed the coastal territory of East Germany, once in the region of Heiligendamm, 15 kilometers from Rostock (an area reported by West Berlin papers on the same day as being one where extensive Soviet fortifications were under constructin), and the second time in the region of Darmgarten, also on the Baltic coast.

According to the ADN dispatch, Chuikov noted that illegal flights by U.S. planes were being repeated despite warnings

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279 FBIS, Daily Report, June 30, 1952.

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from the High Command of the Soviet occupation troops in letters of May 26 and June 7.[280]

The New York Times special dispatch from Berlin which carried the ADN report also gave background information on the number of recent air incidents alleged to have occurred over Germany. In the previous two months, the New York Times noted, the East German press had twice printed charges that planes of the Western powers en route to Berlin had deviated from assigned corridors to take aerial photos of possible future military targets. The Times dispatch indicated that Soviet authorities in Germany had made seven complaints in eight weeks of Allied air violations of East German territory.

The cumulative total of notes exchanged in Berlin during the previous eight weeks, according to the Times, was approximately fifty-two (forty, if allowance were made for the cases in which the three Western powers issued identical notes).[281]

69. YUGOSLAV PROTEST AGAINST HUNGARIAN AIR VIOLATIONS (June 23, 1952)

A Yugoslav note of June 24, broadcast by Belgrade radio on the same day, charged Hungarian planes with having violated

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280 The ADN report broadcast by Berlin radio and carried in the New York Times, June 23, 1952.

281 For interpretation, see case study No. 97.

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Yugoslav air space ten times on June 23. The alleged violations were said to have occurred along various sections of the Yugoslav-Hungarian border, and to have been made by groups of from two to seven planes which penetrated up to 14 kilometers within Yugoslav territory.

The Yugoslav Foreign Ministry stated that these incidents proved beyond doubt that the Hungarian government desired to intensify hostile activities against Yugoslavia.

There was no indication whether Yugoslav forces had attempted or had an opportunity to take military counteraction against the Hungarian planes.[282]

70. CZECH PROTEST OF AIR VIOLATIONS BY U.S. PLANES (June 24, 1952)

On June 24, the Czech government protested in a note to the U.S. against the "intentional violation" of Czech air space by USAFE planes based in Germany.

It is unclear whether the Czech note was publicly disclosed by either side. Up to July 8, neither Soviet nor Satellite media had reported or commented on the Prague note; and this

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[282] FBIS, Daily Report, June 25, 1952.

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apparently included Czech media as well.[283] Nor did a check of the New York Times reveal any reference to such a note. Classified sources have not been consulted in the preparation of this case study.

71. YUGOSLAV PROTEST AGAINST HUNGARIAN AIR VIOLATIONS (June 24 and 25, 1952)

A Belgrade broadcast on June 25 charged that during that morning Hungarian planes had again violated Yugoslav air space to a depth of 15 kilometers.

On the same day, another Yugoslav protest note, covering the new violation, was given the Hungarian Legation. In publishing the new protest note, Radio Belgrade announced that copies of its two notes would be sent to the United Nations.

The Belgrade broadcast noted also that the Hungarian government had not yet indicated what measures it was taking to bring such violations to an end, and that the Yugoslav government was taking the necessary measures to prevent similar violations of its territory in the future. The broadcast also listed in detail the violations which had occurred on June 24 and 25.[284]

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283 FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Broadcasts, July 10, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.

284 FBIS, Daily Report, June 25 and 26, 1952.

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72. ALBANIAN PROTEST AGAINST YUGOSLAV AIR DROP OF PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS (June 25, 1952)

On July 12, 1952, the Albanian radio announced that a note had been sent to the Yugoslav government protesting five cases of land and air "provocations" between June 18 and 25. One of these was an alleged overflight of several Albanian villages by a Yugoslav plane on June 25, in the course of which "subversive propaganda material" was said to have been dropped.

The Albanian note charged, further, that despite repeated protests no steps had been taken by the Yugoslav government to reduce such actions, but that, in fact, "hostile activities" against Albania had been intensified.

A copy of the Albanian note was said to have been dispatched to the Secretariat of the United Nations. The accompanying letter, signed by the Albanian foreign minister, included a demand that the United Nations take necessary measures to end such activities on the part of the Yugoslav government, "activity which serves the plans of the Anglo-American imperialist war mongers."[285]

73. CZECHS CHARGE COLORADO BEETLES DROPPED BY FOREIGN PLANES (June, 1952)

A Czech home service broadcast of June 23, 1953, charged that Colorado beetles had recently been dropped by foreign

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285 FBIS, Daily Report, July 14, 1952.

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aircraft.[286] While the nationality of the planes was not indicated, references to "Western imperialists" and "the American beetle" left little doubt that the Czech intention was to implicate the United States once again.[287]

As far as is known, in the present instance, no diplomatic protest was made to the United States by the Czech government.

74. GERMAN COMMUNIST CHARGE THAT U.S. PLANE DROPPED COLORADO BEETLES (June, 1952)

The charge was made in an East German news agency dispatch.[288] So far as is known, no diplomatic protest was transmitted; nor was the allegation repeated by Soviet sources.

The ADN dispatch stated that "a two-engined U.S. aircraft, flying from the direction of Helmstedt, crossed the demarcation line a few days ago and dropped boxes containing Colorado beetles over the villages of Beendorf and Schwarefeld, according to information received from the People's Police and the population of the Marienborn area. The population established the exact places the beetles were dropped and cleared the fields affected so that there will be no damage to the potato crop."

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286 FBIS, Daily Report, June 25, 1952.

287 See case studies Nos. 34 and 35 for earlier Soviet-Czech protests against alleged dropping of Colorado beetles by U.S. planes.

288 ADN, June 19, 1952.

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75. U.S. ADMISSION OF VIOLATION OF BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR (June, 1952)

A note of June 17, 1952, signed by U.S. Major General Lemuel Mathewson and made public on June 18, stated that a U.S. unmarked hospital plane had strayed from the air corridor to Berlin. The U.S. note added that appropriate disciplinary action had been taken.

The U.S. note was in a reply to a Soviet charge that a U.S. plane had committed a "gross violation" of East German territory. The date of the alleged air violation and of the Soviet protest were not given in the account published in the New York Times, June 19, 1952.

The Times dispatch also noted that, as on previous occasions, the latest Soviet note stated that the U.S. would have to accept full responsibility for the "consequences of such actions." This latest exchange, the Times continued, brought to more than forty the number of notes and protests hurled back and forth in Berlin during the previous seven weeks.

The Times account did not make clear whether either the Soviets or the East German communists had publicly disclosed their latest protest.[289]

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289 For interpretation, see case study No. 97.

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76. REPORT OF OVERFLIGHT OF WEST GERMAN TERRITORY BY FOUR CZECH FIGHTERS (June, 1952)

On June 18, 1952, West German border police reported that four Czech fighters had crossed into Bavaria and had circled two small border towns, Arzberg and Matredwitz, for several minutes before returning to Czechoslovakia.[290]

77. SOVIET PROTEST OF ALLEGED VIOLATION OF EAST GERMAN BORDER BY BRITISH FIGHTER (June, 1952)

ADN, the official East German news agency (communist) revealed, on June 14, 1952, that Soviet officials in Germany had filed a formal protest with British authorities, charging that a British jet fighter had crossed the East German zonal frontier.

The protest, dated June 13, was signed by Major General N. M. Trusov, Soviet deputy chief of staff, and was addressed to Major General John Kirkman, British deputy chief of staff.[291]

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290 The New York Times, June 19, 1952.

291 The New York Times, June 15, 1952. For interpretation, see case study No. 97.

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78. OVERFLIGHTS OF DANISH ISLES IN BALTIC BY UNIDENTIFIED PLANES (July 1, 1952)

A special dispatch from Copenhagen to the New York Times (July 3, 1952) reported that foreign jet planes had overflown most of the Danish islands of Falster and Lolland in the Baltic Sea south of Zealand on the night of July 1-2. The dispatch added that planes had been observed over the islands in great numbers in the last few days, and that the strong gunfire heard over the Baltic was thought to indicate that maneuvers were being held in the southern area of the Baltic. The dispatch noted further that no official Danish statement on the flights had yet been made.[292]

79. SOVIET VIOLATION OF BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR FLIGHT RULES (July 1, 1952)

On July 1, 1952, a single-engine Soviet plane was observed towing a target for air-to-air gunnery practice within the southern Berlin air corridor. Two Soviet MiG's were also observed making firing passes at this target in the same vicinity, also well within the southern air corridor.

The U.S. controller in the Berlin Air Safety Center was instructed to make an oral protest of the above violation of

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292 See case study No. 66 for indication of secret Soviet naval and air maneuvers in the Baltic at about this time.

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A.C.A. air directorate flight rules, which prohibit the towing of targets within the corridor.[293]

80. BULGARIAN PROTEST AGAINST TURKISH AIR VIOLATION (July 2, 1952)

On July 15, 1952, the Bulgarian radio announced that a note had been sent on the preceding day to the Turkish Legation, protesting an overflight, on July 2, by two Turkish planes. The planes, identified as single-engine fighters, were said to have penetrated for 7 miles into Bulgarian territory in the neighborhood of Lesova village, Elhovo Okoliya, "with the obvious intention of reconnoitering."[294]

81. OVERFLIGHT OF BORNHOLM (DANISH) BY UNIDENTIFIED JET BOMBERS (July 12, 1952)

The Stockholm radio was reported as stating that two planes of unidentified nationality which flew over the Danish island of Bornholm on July 12, 1952, were four-motored jets. Military observers were cited as believing that these planes were a new model Soviet jet bomber.[295]

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293 Berlin (Lyon) to Secretary of State, No. 8, July 2, 1952; RESTRICTED.

294 FBIS, Daily Report, July 16, 1952.

295 Ibid., July 14, 1952.

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82. YUGOSLAV CHARGE OF SOVIET OVERFLIGHT (July 14, 1952)

On July 15, 1952, the Yugoslav government charged that a Soviet jet fighter plane, carrying Soviet markings, violated Yugoslav air space for about three minutes near the village of Lukos.[296] A French AFP Radioteletype broadcast on July 15, datelined Belgrade, added that, according to an official Yugoslav announcement, the violation took place on the Hungarian-Yugoslav border at Mukos, near Subotica. The Paris dispatch noted that this was the first time that a Soviet plane had overflown Yugoslav soil, earlier violations having been made by Satellite planes.[297]

83. SOVIET PROTEST AGAINST U.S. AND FRENCH VIOLATIONS OF BERLIN AIR CORRIDOR (July 15, 1952)

On July 26, 1952, the official (communist) East German news agency disclosed that Soviet authorities in Germany had made a protest, on July 24, against violations of the air corridors by French and U.S. planes on July 15.

The type of U.S. plane alleged to have violated the southern air corridor and the place of the alleged overflight were not given in the ADN dispatch. Similarly, the French

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296 The New York Times, July 16, 1952.

297 FBIS, Daily Report, July 16, 1952.

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plane was not further identified, though it was alleged to have made the violation "west of Halle."[298]

The wording of the Soviet notes, signed by Major General Trusov, was said to be almost identical with that in previous Soviet protests regarding alleged deviations from the air lanes.[299] The notes held that the United States and the French would be responsible for any "undesirable consequences" that might result from future violations of this sort.[300]

84. SOVIET PROTESTS AGAINST ALLEGED VIOLATION OF VIENNA AIR CORRIDOR BY U.S. PLANES
(July 16, 1952; also June 10, 11, 24, and July 10, 1952)

In a letter dated July 16, 1952, Soviet High Commissioner in Austria Sviridov held that the 1946 agreement, which stipulated that advance notice of U.S. flights in the Austrian air corridors would not be required, applied only to transport and liaison flights of the occupying powers. The issue of advance notice had been raised by the Soviets earlier in connection with the buzzing of High Commissioner Donnelly's plane on June 4, 1952.[301]

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298 FBIS, Daily Report, July 28, 1952.

299 The New York Times, July 27, 1952.

300 For interpretation, see case study No. 97.

301 See case study No. 63.

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Sviridov charged that the air corridor was being used illegally for flights by U.S. military planes of the B-26 type. He charged that violations by military planes took place on June 10, 11, 24 and July 10. One of the alleged violations included an overflight of the Soviet air base at Wiener Neustadt at a height of 600 meters. Sviridov added that U.S. planes had been using these air corridors at night and had left the corridors; he cited, in this context, an alleged corridor violation by a U.S. C-47 on the night of July 9-10, 1952.

Sviridov's protest ended by informing the U.S. High Commissioner that Soviet authorities would take strict measures against violations in the future.[302]

Apparently Sviridov's protest was not published; however, a thorough check on this point has not been made. Further details are lacking.

85. SOVIET ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA UTILIZING AIR INCIDENTS (July 27, 1952)

In connection with the annual Soviet air show in Moscow, wide distribution and publicity were given to an official Russian poster which depicted Soviet fighter planes warding off

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302 U.S. Embassy, Vienna, to Department of State, No. 187 (July 28, 1952); RESTRICTED.

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alleged intrusions over Soviet frontiers by U.S. planes. Three air incidents were depicted in the poster; in each case a U.S. military aircraft was under attack by Soviet jet fighters. Descriptive information on the poster identified the U.S. planes as the "B-29" (actually a U.S. Navy Privateer) shot down in the Baltic on April 8, 1950, the U.S. plane downed by Soviet fighters in Hungary in November, 1951, and the Neptune (U.S. Navy) shot down off Vladivostok in November, 1951.

The poster was emblazoned with the following slogan: "Glory to Stalin's Falcons, standing on guard of the peace and security of our country."

The purpose of the celebration of these three air incidents on Soviet Air Force Day was spelled out in a Pravda editorial on July 16, 1952. "Today," stated the editorial, "the Soviet Air Force keeps the frontiers of our country well locked....No air pirate on whatever aircraft he might fly, however fast his airplane might fly, and however high he might try to fly it, will dare to cross the air frontier of our great peace-loving country...." Apparently referring to the April 8, 1950, Baltic incident, the editorial warned the West against violating Soviet frontiers in the future.[303]

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303 FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Radio Broadcasts (12-18 July 1950); CONFIDENTIAL.

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U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union George Kennan deliberately stayed away from the air show to emphasize the U.S. protest against the posters, which had been delivered at the Soviet Foreign Office on July 26. On August 1, Pravda replied to Kennan's protest, contending that the poster had presented facts. In a sharply-worded editorial, Pravda commented that, in all three cases, the "uninvited guests were given a deserved lesson" and held them up as a "warning to those who would try to violate the Soviet frontiers. It cited in this context the Colliers special World War III issue, and a map printed in Fortune that depicted U.S. military bases around the Soviet Union, and similar instances of "warmongering."[304]

In a dispatch to the Department of State, Ambassador Kennan noted that the Soviet poster was only a small part of the then current flood of anti-American propaganda, against which the United States had not protested. He felt, nonetheless, that the present poster could not be allowed to be unnoticed by the United States because it was "so studiously insulting and arrogant...so directly addressed to U.S. armed force." [305]

The Soviet intention behind the posters was analyzed by Kennan as follows: "Putting out of these posters is, of course, designed as a means of emphasizing (as was done in granting

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304 Ya. Viktorov, "Straight to the Mark!," Pravda, August 1, 1952; translated in Current Digest of the Soviet Press, September 13, 1952, p. 12.

305 U.S. Embassy, Moscow (Kennan) to Secretary of State, No. 152 (July 23, 1952); RESTRICTED.

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awards to crews of Soviet fighters in certain of these incidents) that the Soviet Government has no regret for American lives lost and is proud of its flyers' exploits in shooting down or forcing down these presumably non-resisting aircraft."[306]

86. FINNISH PROTEST OF BRITISH OVERFLIGHT OF NAVAL BASE (July, 1952)

According to a New York Times dispatch of July 17, 1952, Finland protested that a British plane carrying forty athletes to the Olympic games had overflown the naval base of Porkkala, treaty-leased to the U.S.S.R. Further details are lacking.

87. REPORT OF SOVIET OVERFLIGHT OF WEST GERMANY (BRITISH ZONE) (July, 1952)

A New York Times dispatch of July 6, 1952, cited a report from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Interior that, on July 4, a Soviet aircraft had circled a short-wave transmitter near Luchow in the British Zone (about 5 miles from the Russian Zone frontier). Confirmation from Allied sources and further details are lacking.

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306 U.S. Embassy, Moscow (Kennan) to Secretary of State, No. 152 (July 23, 1952); RESTRICTED.

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88. ALBANIAN CHARGE OF AIR VIOLATIONS BY GREECE AND YUGOSLAVIA (July, 1952)

According to a New York Times dispatch of July 24, 1952, Albania charged before the United Nations that Greek and Yugoslav planes had violated its borders. The charge was denied by Greece in a letter to the United Nations.[307]

89. SOVIET PROTEST OF AIR VIOLATIONS BY U.S. AND FRENCH AIRCRAFT IN GERMANY (July, 1952)

ADN, the official East German news agency (communist), reported on July 3, 1952, that General Chuikov, Soviet High Commissioner for Germany, had protested to the United States and French High Commands on recent air violations by their planes. No further details were given in the ADN report, which was cited by the New York Times, July 4, 1952.[308]

90. REPORT OF FIVE CZECH OVERFLIGHTS OF WEST GERMANY (U.S. ZONE) (July, 1952)

The Bavarian border police reported, on July 7, 1952, that five overflights of West Germany had been made in the preceding

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307 The New York Times, July 29, 1952.

308 For interpretation, see case study No. 97.

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week by Czech jet planes. Reports of such flights had come from Zwiesel, Wolfstein, and Mehring. According to a Bavarian border police spokesman, the planes flew a few miles over the border, circled over the villages, and, it was presumed, took photographs.[309]

Confirmation by U.S. sources and further details are lacking.

91. CZECH PROTESTS OF ALLEGED U.S. AIR VIOLATIONS (July and August, 1952)

In addition to the Czech note of June 24, 1952, protesting alleged U.S. air violations, an unknown number of similar protests were evidently made to U.S. authorities by the Czech Defence Ministry during the three-month period June-August, 1952.[310]

Apparently, these protests were not publicly disclosed by either side. It may be noted that during the diplomatic dispute following the incident of March 10, 1953, Czech officials gave a detailed statistical resumé of alleged U.S. air violations from mid-1950 to mid-1951.[311] However, no resumé was given for the period following mid-1951. Rather, the more general assertion was made that "notwithstanding assurances to the contrary from the United States Government, flights by American planes continued

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309 The New York Times, July 8, 1952.

310 Bonn (Donnelly) to Secretary of State, No. 2347, November 21, 1952, citing cable received by USAREUR from U.S. Air Attaché on November 18 (SX 5311); CONFIDENTIAL.

311 See case study No. 102.

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at the same rate in 1952. The Czechoslovak Government once again issued protests and warned that "the entire responsibility...lay squarely on the shoulders of the United States Government."[312] A Czech broadcast in English to Europe, on March 13, 1953, was even less specific for the period after the middle of 1951, tnough it gave a detailed resumé for the earlier period: "...since that time [June 8, 1951] there have been repetitions of intentional hostile actions...."[313]

92. SOVIET AIR RECONNAISSANCE OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE (1952-1953)

Only public accounts of Soviet (or Satellite) aerial reconnaissance of noncommunist territories have been examined for this case study.

The only overall statement encountered in public accounts on the extent of Soviet strategic air reconnaissance was that made by the Alsop brothers in their syndicated column on March 17, 1953. The essential assertions presented by these columnists, for which no source was given, were as follows:

(a) Soviet air reconnaissance of the Western Hemisphere began in the summer of 1952; the earliest sightings

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312 Speech before the U.N. General Assembly by the Czech delegate, David, on March 23, 1953. (Italics added.)

313 FBIS, Daily Report, March 17, 1953.

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of such flights were over Alaska and northwestern Canada.

(b) Detection of unidentified aircraft (presumed to be Soviet reconnaissance planes) has been made mainly by means of visual sightings of contrails (vapor trails that consolidate in cold air in the wake of high-flying aircraft); few of the contrail sightings have been accompanied by radar detection.

(c) Approximately twelve sightings have been confirmed as undoubtedly resulting from Soviet reconnaissance missions, of which two occurred in early March, 1953, one in northern Canada and the other in the vicinity of the important U.S. air base in Thule, Greenland.

(d) No Soviet reconnaissance planes have been intercepted.

Subsequent to the Alsop brothers' statement on this subject, authoritative sources in Washington disclosed essentially the same information regarding at least twelve Soviet overflights within the previous year over the polar area of the North American continent and Greenland.[314]

Official disclosures by USAF of instances of suspected Soviet air reconnaissance of the Western Hemisphere have been made on at least two occasions.

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[314] Special dispatch of August 1, 1953, The New York Times, August 2, 1953.

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On December 13, 1952, USAF disclosed that contrails of an unidentified aircraft had been spotted from a U.S. Air Force plane over Greenland on December 10, 1952. Although the Northeast Air Command Headquarters in Newfoundland, the Air Defense Command, and the Pentagon were at once notified, no general alert was sounded, because no pattern was established through sighting of the unidentified aircraft by a number of sources. The radar network covering Greenland did not pick up the unidentified plane. The direction of the contrails indicated that the plane making them would be flying away from the United States.[315]

On March 16, 1953, a USAF spokesman stated that vapor trails from engines of unidentified planes had been sighted occasionally over the far northern approaches to the North American continent.[316] The most recent report of such activity, he stated, had come from an airborne observer over Alaska on March 10; it resulted in a brief "yellow alert." The USAF spokesman was apparently queried on an A.P. dispatch of March 11 from Fairbanks, Alaska, quoting the Fairbanks News-Miner, which reported a "yellow alert" there on the night of March 7.

In an article entitled "Russian Planes Are Raiding Canadian Skies," Colliers, October 16, 1953, William A. Ulman reported an eyewitness account of an unsuccessful attempt by U.S. jet

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315 The Washington Post, December 14, 1952.
316 Ibid., March 17, 1953.

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fighter-interceptors of the Alaskan Air Command to intercept an unidentified plane, "almost certainly a Russian," which had been picked up by radar stations on the west coast of Alaska. Ulman did not explicitly state whether the unidentified plane in question had actually violated U.S. territory or territorial waters, but added the following statement: "Almost every day, at least one unidentified airplane violates /sic/ our continental borders." A general in the Alaskan Air Command was quoted as saying: "They /Russian planes/ come in at all times and places and some have even penetrated deep into north central Canada."

The frequency of Soviet air violations in this area as reported by Ulman appears to contradict information previously released to the press by authoritative sources in Washington.[317] Similarly contradictory is Ulman's reference to the detection of unidentified planes by means of radar, since information disclosed previously had indicated that detection of unidentified planes had been made mainly by means of visual sightings of contrails and that few contrail sightings had been accompanied by radar detection.

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317 It is possible, of course, that there has been an increase in detections since the earlier disclosure by the Alsop brothers (March 17, 1952) and by "authoritative sources" in Washington (August 1, 1953). This possibility seems unlikely, however. The Ulman article, published in mid-October, 1953, was probably several months in preparation; he refers to the day on which the incident took place as an "Arctic summer day."

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From the context of Ulman's story it seems likely that most of the violations detected by U.S. Alaskan coastal radar defenses refer to a type of Soviet air reconnaissance which, so far as we know, has not been heretofore publicly disclosed. The twelve or more detections disclosed earlier had reference, apparently, to high-flying Soviet planes which penetrated the northern part of the Western Hemisphere in some depth and, perhaps, at points other than the Alaskan coast. The almost daily violations reported by Ulman, on the other hand, appear to be, for the most part, instances of perimeter reconnaissance of the Alaskan coast by Soviet planes. Such flights need not commit actual violations of Alaskan territory or territorial waters to accomplish their mission, though Ulman did not make that point. And, as Ulman reported, such planes are difficult to intercept since they can quickly return to international air space or, given the proximity of Soviet territory to Alaska at some points, to their own territory as soon as U.S. fighter-interceptors take to the air:

> Their mission [that of the Soviet planes detected by U.S. radar-posts on the Alaskan coast] apparently is to feel out our radar defenses and photograph our coasts, and when our jets go out to meet them, they run.[318]

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318 Ulman, op. cit.

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93. REPORTED DISAPPEARANCE OF U.S. OBSERVATION PLANE IN NORTHWEST PACIFIC (August, 1952)

The FBIS's Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts of August 13, 1952, listed as an "omission" in Soviet broadcasts for the preceding week any reference to the "reported disappearance of an American observation plane in the Northwest Pacific."

We have been unable to find any other reference to this incident in public or classified sources. FBIS personnel were unable to locate the original reference which formed the basis for their report.

94. CZECH ALLEGATION OF AERIAL SURVEYING AND DROPPING OF COLORADO BEETLES BY U.S. PLANES (August, 1952)

A Moscow broadcast of August 19, 1952, stated that "American planes systematically violate the Czechoslovak frontier for aerial surveying of Czechoslovak territory. In an effort to cause damage...they dropped agricultural pests, particularly the Colorado beetle." This charge was said to have been contained in an article in Pravda on the subject of American hostility to Czechoslovakia written by the Czech Minister of Security Bacilek.[319]

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319 FBIS, Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts, August 27, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.

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No further details are available. Evidently the public allegation in question was not followed or preceded by a Czech diplomatic protest to the U.S. Perhaps the article in question -- the full text of which has not been examined -- made no fresh charges, but simply rehashed old ones.

95. SOVIET PROTEST OF ALLEGED VIOLATION OF EASTERN GERMANY BY A U.S. C-54 (ACTUALLY A BELGIAN SABENA PLANE) (September 8, 1952)

The Soviets mistakenly attributed a violation of East German territory by a Belgian Sabena plane to a U.S. C-54. In their reply to the Soviet protest, U.S. officials in Germany stated merely that the plane in question was of "foreign registry" and that it was "overflying the U.S. Zone." From this, State Department officials in Berlin assumed, Soviet officials could easily infer by consulting timetables of scheduled flights that the plane in question came from Czechoslovakia and that it must have been a Belgian Sabena.

No evidence of a public disclosure of the incident by either side has come to our attention.

Significance

The incident is interesting in clarifying some policy considerations governing U.S. replies to Soviet protests at the Berlin Air Safety Center.

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The Department of State expressed a reservation to HICOG's reply to the Soviet protest (see above) on the ground that the reference to "aircraft of foreign registry" might have created an unnecessary suspicion in the Soviets' minds.[320] It queried, further, whether it would not have been to the best interests of the United States to have given the foreign carrier's name, and the Department suggested further that this might be adopted as a general policy unless HICOG had persuasive reasons to the contrary.

In reply HICOG commented as follows:

> It has always been the policy of the Berlin Element to reply to protests voiced by the Soviet controller at the Berlin Air Safety Center promptly and in an honest, straightforward fashion. (The few exceptions to this rule have been dictated by operational necessities of the U.S. Military Forces.) However, we have studiously refrained from giving the Russians any more information than was absolutely required. In other words, we have rendered no gratuitous help to the Soviets.
>
> Indeed, there have been cases when we had occasion to believe that a British or French aircraft of American manufacture might have committed the offense which the Soviets ascribed to us. In such cases we have given the Soviet controller nothing but a flat disclaimer. Upon receipt of our reply, the Soviet has often canvassed our British and French colleagues in turn. Major Gubanov has good reason to know that he can expect from the U.S. controller only the same minimum of cooperation which he gives us...the British and French follow the identical policy.[321]

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320 Department of State cable, No. A-494 (October 13, 1952).

321 HICOG, Berlin Element to HICOG, Bonn, "Soviet Protests in Berlin Air Safety Center" (October 31, 1952); SECRET.

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The HICOG reply noted, finally, that the reason for not giving the actual identification of the plane in replying to the Russians was that it was considered politically undesirable to make such an admission regarding our Belgian ally.

96. BRITISH R.A.F. PLANE IN EMERGENCY LANDING ON U.S. AIR FORCE BASE AT THULE, GREENLAND (September, 1952)

This incident is of relevance to the present study in that it illuminated and, indirectly, disclosed U.S. policy toward unidentified planes which approach or intrude upon U.S. air space. After the Kamchatka incident of March 15, 1953, a USAF spokesman referred to the Thule incident in precisely this context, in an effort to illustrate U.S. air-defense policy toward nonhostile air "intruders."[322]

According to newspaper accounts, the present incident involved one of the R.A.F.'s most prized aircraft, a specially fitted navigational bomber, which was on a transpolar flight to White Horse on the Yukon. Mechanical failure in one engine while in the Polar region led to a change in course for Thule. The U.S. airfield at Thule, however, was fog-bound, and atmospheric disturbances ruled out a radar landing.

A further complication arose in that U.S. personnel at the Thule base had no means of identifying the plane as friendly

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322 See case study No. 104.

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or unfriendly. According to the newspaper accounts, Thule is on a constant alert for unidentified aircraft. The U.S. tower control at Thule talked with the R.A.F. plane by radio. The possibility was considered that the request for an emergency landing was a carefully contrived ruse, though the voices and facts transmitted from the unidentified plane seemed to authenticate its identity.

As a result of the lack of standard British-U.S. radio and navigation procedures, the R.A.F. plane came within minutes of plunging into the Arctic waters. It finally landed after radar disturbances cleared up.[323]

97. U.S. UNMARKED HOSPITAL PLANE FIRED UPON BY SOVIET FIGHTERS IN BERLIN CORRIDOR (October 8, 1952)

While en route to Berlin on October 8, 1952, an unarmed U.S. twin-engine transport (C-47) was harassed by two Soviet jet planes which fired several machine-gun bursts in its vicinity. The incident took place in the same area where, on the preceding April 29, a French airliner had been damaged by Soviet fighters.[324] The U.S. plane did not suffer any damage. The moral gravity of having fired on a hospital plane was spared the Soviets in that the C-47 carried no special markings to indicate it was a hospital plane.

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323 The New York Times, September 20, 1952.

324 See case study No. 57.

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Within a few hours, General Mathewson, U.S. Commander in Berlin, officially protested the action as "uncivilized." But, at the same time, the U.S. protest note left it open whether or not the plane had at one point accidentally flown outside the assigned air corridor.[325]

On the following day, October 9, Major General N. M. Trusov, chief of the Russian occupation staff, rejected the U.S. protest. He charged that the U.S. plane had "grossly violated" the air corridor by as much as 30 Km. (18 miles), and for a period of fifty-five minutes.[326]

The U.S. protest was reaffirmed by General Mathewson on October 16. Conceding the possibility of an unintentional violation, Mathewson focused the dispute on Soviet air-defense policy, that is, on whether Soviet planes had the right in such circumstances to fire weapons in a militant fashion, a practice which violated existing quadripartite air traffic rules.[327]

This protest, too, was rejected by the Soviets as "groundless," this time by the Soviet representative at the Berlin Air Safety Center. Thereafter, diplomatic discussion of the incident between the two powers was evidently conducted on a private basis. Several oral statements on the issue were exchanged by the U.S. and Soviet representatives at the B.A.S.C.

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325 The New York Times, October 9, 1952.

326 The text of Trusov's protest was not broadcast, but an account of it was transmitted by TASS and other communist media. See FBIS, Daily Report, October 10, 1952, and The New York Times, October 10, 1952.

327 The New York Times, October 17, 1952.

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Significance

Soviet Motive

The hypothesis must be seriously considered that the Soviet fighters fired with full hostile intent upon the U.S. C-47 in implementation of Soviet policy on treatment of aerial intruders. Although the U.S. plane was not hit, it would seem that only rapid evasive action and utilization of cloud cover, not self-imposed limitations on the part of the Soviet fighters, saved the C-47 from damage or destruction.

The first U.S. communiqué following the incident stated that the shots fired by the Soviet fighters had apparently been intended as a warning or as a device to attract attention.[328] General Mathewson's formal protest note of October 8, however, held that the maneuvering and fire of the Soviet planes constituted "a definite and hostile threat to the flight safety of the aircraft." He added that "only by taking full advantage of available cloud cover had the plane been able to escape."[329]

The Soviet motive appears to have been a technical one, i.e., one concerned with the problem of air violations. Unlike the case of the Air France incident of April 29, the present incident did not lead Western analysts to speculate on the possibility that a political or diplomatic motive lay behind the Soviet action. Not only did the political situation in Germany at this time itself fail to suggest any apparent political

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328 The New York Times, October 9, 1952.

329 Ibid.

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motive for the Soviet action; the diplomatic and propaganda handling of the incident by the Soviets, too, seemed consonant with a purely technical air-defense motivation. No effort was made by the Soviets to suggest that the incident had political significance in terms of current international disputes. The incident and the diplomatic notes which followed received a minimum of attention in Soviet media.[330]

The hypothesis that the Soviet motive was a technical one is even more plausible when it is remembered that the U.S. plane had indeed deviated from the assigned air corridor. On October 16, in reaffirming his earlier protest, General Mathewson conceded that the C-47 may have been off course owing to strong crosswinds and the failure of navigational equipment.[331]

Bearing on Soviet Air-Defense Policy in Berlin Corridor

Once again, as in the Air France case, the Soviet version of the facts of the incident resembled the stereotype associated

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330 FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Broadcasts, October 16, 1952, p. 6; CONFIDENTIAL.

331 There appears to be little doubt that the U.S. aircraft was outside and south of the air corridor, though reports from Berlin, Bonn, and USAFE disagreed about the distance involved, reporting variously that the aircraft was ten, thirteen, twenty-five, and twenty-six miles out of the corridor. Since radar readings were taken at different times, several or all of these estimates may be correct. (Draft summary memo, State Department; SECRET. See also Wiesbaden to Secretary of State, unnumbered [October 18, 1952]; SECRET; CINCUSAFE [Wiesbaden] to Secretary of State [October 9, 1952]; SECRET.)

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with the tough Soviet air-defense policy.[332]

In neither case could the full Soviet stereotype be reproduced, since neither plane was shot down. But the essential portion of the stereotype, regarding an alleged failure on the part of the intruding plane to follow instructions to land at a Soviet airfield, was reproduced in both these incidents. This permits us to infer with some plausibility that the severe Soviet policy was in effect at the time of these two incidents, though failure to shoot down the two planes indicates that it was unsuccessfully implemented.

The Soviet note of October 9 referred unmistakably to the key provision of the severe Soviet air-defense policy when it charged that "the American plane ignored orders of the Soviet aircraft to land and attempted to hide in the clouds." This unmarked hospital plane incident, therefore, reinforces the interpretation derived from the Air France incident that the Soviets were attempting to extend to the Berlin corridors the tough air-defense policy that they had previously applied to their own borders.

The possibility that the severity of Soviet air-defense policy was modified in certain respects when applied to violations of the air corridors has already been discussed in connection with the Air France case.[333] Several aspects of the

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332 See case studies of April 8, 1950, and October 7, 1952, in Supplement (TOP SECRET), and case studies Nos. 53 and 66 in present volume.

333 See case study No. 57.

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present incident serve to reinforce this impression. First, as we have seen, there is no doubt that the C-47 made a substantial violation of the corridor, one which the local Soviet air-defense command might well have considered a "gross violation." Secondly, as in the Air France case, the intercepting MiG's may have given some sort of signal or warning before opening fire.[334] Thirdly, during the five-month period between the Air France case and the present one, the Soviets seem to have deliberately passed up opportunities to create similar incidents, perhaps out of a desire to avoid undue political complications which might have arisen from too frequent repetition of such clashes.

At least two or three of the twelve air violations of the corridor charged by the Soviets in the five-month period between the two incidents could well have been considered "gross" violations by the Soviets. Yet, to our knowledge, all of these alleged violations were unopposed by Soviet air-defense forces. Since Soviet capability and -- we may assume, at least in some of the twelve cases -- opportunity for military counteraction existed, the absence of such counteraction was probably deliberate, and may be attributed to Soviet policy calculations.

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[334] The Soviet MiG's were reported to have made several passes at the U.S. plane before opening fire. (The New York Times, October 10, 1952.) Apparently, also, one of the MiG's rocked its wings before opening fire on the third pass. Such a signal, however, was not in accord with procedure outlined in quadripartite air regulations, for, according to these regulations, rocking of the wings meant "you may proceed." (Frankfurt /Donnelly/ to Secretary of State, No. 709; October 10, 1952; SECRET.)

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These intervening alleged violations, protested diplomatically by the Soviets, have been listed in separate case studies and need only be summarized in Table I. Information on these incidents is incomplete because of lack of access to appropriate U.S. and Allied records. It will be noted that in at least seven of their twelve notes of protest the Soviets explicitly warned that responsibility for the consequences in case of a repetition of the violation would rest with the Western power concerned.

U.S. Diplomatic Handling of Incident

We have noted that Western authorities in Berlin had been disposed to view the earlier Air France incident as an isolated occurrence. After the unmarked hospital plane incident, however, U.S. State Department officers in Berlin became concerned lest the hostile action of the MiG's against the U.S. C-47 indicate a new and tougher Soviet air-defense policy.[335] This, in turn, gave new focus and urgency to the U.S. diplomatic response to the incident.

In contesting the Soviet action against the C-47, U.S. officials in Berlin appear to have followed recommendations contained in the State Department report just cited. In this report it was noted that existing quadripartite agreements

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A State Department report postulated that such Soviet counteraction against Allied planes along the corridor had been confined thus far to cases where the Allied aircraft was "well outside the corridor." (Frankfurt [Donnelly] to Secretary of State, No. 709 [October 10, 1952]; SECRET.)

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TABLE I

Date	Soviet Description of Alleged Air Violation	Date of Soviet Diplomatic Protest	Public Disclosure of Incident
May 8, 1952	French Beachcraft C-49 Voyageur, north of Erfurt, overflew three towns "at considerable distance from the air corridor"	May 8 or 9	by Soviets (ADN, May 9)
*May 12, 1952	French plane (DC-4) left air corridor	not known	by Soviets (May 15)
May 18, 1952	British plane flew out of corridor at Ludwigslust (Mecklenburg) and "for some time" flew across East Germany "considerably off the permitted flight route"	not known	by Soviets (ADN, May 24)
May 26, 1952	U.S. plane (details lacking)	May 26	by Soviets (Berlin radio, June 22 [?])
June 7, 1952	U.S. plane (details lacking; may be the violation by a U.S. hospital plane admitted by U.S. General Mathewson in note of June 17; publicly disclosed June 18. The Soviets had charged this plane with a "gross" violation)	June 7	by Soviets (?) in Berlin radio broadcast, June 22

* Information about these two incidents became available after RAND RM-1346, Soviet Reactions to Border Flights and Overflights in Peacetime (TOP SECRET) was prepared. Hence they were not included in Table IV of RM-1346.

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TABLE I (Cont'd)

Date	Soviet Description of Alleged Air Violation	Date of Soviet Diplomatic Protest	Public Disclosure of Incident
June 13, 1952 (probable)	British jet fighter crossed East German zonal frontier	June 13	by Soviets (ADN, June 14)
June 19, 1952	U.S. C-54 violated corridor at Hasenthal, overflew Ilmenau, Ohrdorf, Eisenach, Heiligenstadt, Teistungen	not known	by Soviets (Berlin radio, June 22)
June 19, 1952	U.S. single-engine plane twice violated East German Baltic coast, near Heiligendamm and Darmgarten	not known	by Soviets (Berlin radio, June 22)
Not known	Recent air violations by U.S. and French planes (details lacking)	not known	by Soviets (ADN, July 3)
July 15, 1952	U.S. aircraft violation of southern Berlin air corridor	July 24	by Soviets (ADN, July 26)
July 15, 1952	French aircraft violation of corridor west of Halle	July 24	by Soviets (ADN, July 26)
*September 8, 1952	Violation of East German territory by a U.S. C-54 (actually a Belgian Sabena plane)	not known	not known

* See note on p. 234.

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covering air traffic to and from Berlin ruled out action such as had been taken by the Soviet planes against the C-47. It was pointed out that DAIR/PP(46)132, second revision, December 9, 1946, entitled "Agreement on procedure for visual signals between aircraft in flight, where permission to fly has not been given," provided, in part, as follows:

> (A) Intercepting aircraft may wish to lead the intercepted aircraft away from the particular area and then release it, or
>
> (B) Intercepting aircraft may wish to require the intercepted aircraft to land before releasing it.[336]

Quadripartite approval of DAIR/PP(46)132, second revision, had been recorded in DAIR/MM(46)29, minutes of ACA Air Directorate meeting of December 12, 1946. However, the State Department report went on, "while these minutes apparently were never officially confirmed because of a technicality arising from ACA reorganization which occurred at that time, /we/ have reason to believe that the Soviets are unaware of the discrepancy."

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336 Additional provisions contained in this quadripartite agreement ruled out the Soviet action even more decisively, and were cited in subsequent communications to the Soviet representative in the Berlin Air Safety Center. The quadripartite agreement also stated:

> "II B (1) The intercepting and intercepted aircraft will under no circumstances open fire unless fired upon.
>
> "(2) The pilot of the intercepting aircraft will make a full report after landing if the intercepted aircraft fails to comply with his orders....
>
> "(6) In no case shall the intercepting aircraft point its nose directly toward the intercepted aircraft."

(Frankfurt /Donnelly/ to Secretary of State, No. 778, October 28, 1952; CONFIDENTIAL.)

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The Department's report noted that Soviet Air Force authorities in Germany might not be aware at all of the quadripartite agreement in question.

In view of the fact that Soviet harassment of Allied planes had been apparently limited to aircraft caught in gross violations of the corridor, the State Department report recommended that it would be preferable for the United States not to emphasize air-corridor crises, but to insist firmly on mutual adherence to the terms of the quadripartite agreements, "the preservation of which is entirely to our advantage."

The policy background of subsequent U.S. diplomatic action in this case is not fully illuminated in the materials examined. However, the preceding State Department recommendations, or a similar set of considerations, would seem to have been implemented. Thus, General Mathewson's second protest note, on October 16, insisted that, even if a violation of the corridor had occurred, the "militant use of weapons by Soviet fighter aircraft for whatever purpose it was intended to serve not only placed American lives in jeopardy but constituted a gross violation of the agreed rules and procedures governing air traffic to and from Berlin." This protest, and the position taken therein by General Mathewson, were subsequently rejected as "groundless" by the Soviet representative at the Berlin Air Safety Center.

If this Soviet rejection had been permitted to go unanswered, the Soviets might have construed it as U.S. acknowledgment of

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the implicit Soviet claim that Allied aircraft caught outside the air corridor must comply with Soviet fighter aircraft instructions to land at a Soviet airfield. State Department officials in Germany were alert to this danger;[337] therefore, additional efforts were made by U.S. personnel to obtain Soviet adherence to the quadripartite agreement. Resort was now had to confidential channels, and several "oral statements" were exchanged between representatives of the two powers at the Berlin Air Safety Center, as follows:

November 1, 1952 -- U.S. statement
November 12, 1952 -- Soviet rejection
November 22, 1952 -- U.S. statement
December 8, 1952 -- Soviet rejection

The position taken by the Soviets in these exchanges was that the flight rules in question had been only worked out, but not confirmed. "I must remind you once more," the Soviet representative at the B.A.S.C. stated on December 8, 1952, "that the Control Council in Germany has no flight safety rules confirmed for the flying over of the Eastern Occupation Zone of Germany."[338]

Having failed at the B.A.S.C. level to set the record straight regarding quadripartite air rules governing corridor violations, the State Department then considered it desirable

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337 Frankfurt (Donnelly) to Secretary of State, No. 778 (October 28, 1952); CONFIDENTIAL.

338 Cited in Office of Chief Controller, U.S., Berlin Air Safety Center to CINCUSAFE, December 10, 1952; SECRET.

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to transfer its diplomatic effort to a higher and more formal channel, in view of the importance of the matter and the Soviet threat to U.S. corridor rights.[339] Subsequently, it would appear, the Soviet position was again reaffirmed by Major General N. M. Trusov, chief of staff of the Soviet occupation forces. While information on developments in the dispute after January, 1953, are not available, the State Department showed no tendency to back down in such an important matter.[340] The motivation behind the Soviet effort to deny the existence of any quadripartite flight safety rules governing possible corridor violations was regarded as "possibly ominous" by the State Department.[341]

In sum, therefore, the United States focused the diplomatic dispute arising from the October 8 incident squarely on the significant question of Soviet policy in these matters. This in itself was a major step forward in the history of Western efforts since the Baltic incident of April, 1950, to contest hostile Soviet actions of this type. Apparently, the United States did not succeed, in this instance, in forcing the Soviets to retreat from their new tough policy toward corridor violations.

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339 State Department (Acheson) to HICOG, Bonn; SECRET.

340 Department of State (Dulles) to HICOG (Berlin), January 23, 1953 (CONFIDENTIAL) advised as follows: "Department believes strong refutation of Soviet denial BASC jurisdiction over air corridors is called for, and should assert Quadripartite agreements this nature not subject unilateral arbitrary reinterpretation, nor are Soviet obligations under these agreements lessened by such attempted distortion of facts."

341 Ibid.

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Yet the steady and persistent U.S. pressure applied against Soviet policy in connection with the incident may well have played some role in persuading the Soviets to reconsider their policy in mid-March, 1953, following the British Lincoln-bomber incident.[342]

98. YUGOSLAV CHARGE OF BULGARIAN AIR VIOLATIONS (October 26, 1952)

The Belgrade radio reported that three new violations of Yugoslavia's air space had taken place on October 26. The broadcast, which quoted the Yugoslav Foreign Office, added that Bulgarian troops had opened fire on a Yugoslav pillbox across the border in the same area as the air violations.[343]

99. ALLEGED AIR DROP OF U.S. SABOTEURS INTO POLAND (November 4, 1952)

On January 16, 1953, the Polish government, in a note to the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, protested against "spying and diversionist activities on Polish territory." An account of the protest was broadcast by the Warsaw radio on the following day.[344] The Polish note claimed that two "diversionists,"

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342 See case study No. 103.

343 The New York Times, October 27, 1952.

344 Reuters dispatch dated January 17, 1953 (The New York Times, January 18, 1953). The Polish note was also published in the Warsaw press (The /Washington/ Evening Star, January 19, 1953). The Star dispatch contains a more detailed account of Polish charges.

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trained in a United States "spy center" in West Germany, had been parachuted into Poland from a U.S. Air Force plane on November 4, 1952. The two men were said to have been captured by Polish security agents on the same evening.

Evidently the charge had been made by Polish sources on a previous occasion and had been labeled by American Air Force officers as a fake.[345]

100. YUGOSLAV CHARGES OF AIR BORDER VIOLATIONS BY HUNGARY (January 1 to April 30, 1953)

According to a semiofficial YUGOPRESS summary, a total of 972 "grave" border incidents took place, particularly on the frontier with Hungary, in the period from January 1 to April 30, 1953. These incidents were said to have included firing on Yugoslav territory, throwing of rockets, violations of air space, and dispersing of anti-Yugoslav propaganda.

Yugoslav authorities noted that these incidents had taken place most frequently along the Hungarian border, and involved chiefly violations of Yugoslav air space by jet planes. The belief was expressed that these violations covered up maneuvers of troops near the border.

At the same time, Yugoslav military authorities commented that recent troop movements and other activities in the Soviet

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345 The (Washington) Evening Star, January 19, 1953.

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Satellites, particularly along their borders with Yugoslavia, implied an increased rather than a decreased threat to peace in that part of Europe.[346]

101. CZECH AIR VIOLATIONS OF BAVARIA, WEST GERMANY (February, 1953)

According to a dispatch of March 12, 1953, in the New York Times, West German frontier police in Furth-im-Wald held that Czech planes overflew the Bavarian frontier several times in February, 1953.

102. U.S. F-84 SHOT DOWN BY CZECH MIG[347] (March 10, 1953)

On March 10, 1953, two U.S. F-84 jets based in the U.S. Zone of Germany were attacked over German territory near the Czech border by unidentified MiG's. One of the F-84's was shot down, its pilot parachuting to safety; the other F-84 managed to escape.

The facts of the incident were disputed by the Czech and U.S. governments. The Czech account, given in a note dated March 11, 1953, charged that the two U.S. fighters penetrated

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346 The New York Times, May 17, 1953.

347 Only unclassified sources of information on the F-84 incident were available for this analysis; a few classified sources were utilized in interpreting the significance of the incident.

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Czech territory to a point "18 kilometers south southwest of Plzen at a distance of 40 kilometers from the State frontier," where they were intercepted by Czech fighters and "requested to land." The note continued: "This request was not obeyed. In the air battle /which ensued/ one of the U.S. aircraft fled in a westerly direction, the second was hit and, steadily losing altitude, disappeared in a southwesterly direction."[348] As is the communist practice in such cases, there was no subsequent elaboration or alteration of this account. A Czech note dated March 28, 1953, reiterated the accuracy of its version of the incident, and stated: "The previously mentioned facts are based on the logbook records of the land radiomechanics, the goniometer records, and the radar reports, as well as on the statements of the Czechoslovak pilots."[349]

Quite a different version of the incident was given in the U.S. note of March 13. Additional details appeared in U.S. news accounts, especially in those based on interviews with the U.S. pilots of the two U.S. planes.[350] The most detailed official account of the incident was presented in the U.S. note of August 18, 1954, which preferred a diplomatic claim against the Czech government; this note contained important new statements of fact which bear on the question of the communist

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348 FBIS, Daily Report, March 12, 1953.

349 Department of State Bulletin, August 10, 1953, p. 183.

350 See especially an Associated Press interview with the U.S. pilots in the (Washington) Evening Star, March 11, 1953; and an account of the incident by Lt. Warren G. Brown, the pilot who was shot down, in Life magazine, March 23, 1953.

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motive behind the incident.[351]

In this note the U.S. government made the following findings of fact (abbreviated here) with regard to the incident and indicated its readiness to prove them by evidence before an appropriate forum:

(1) On March 9 and during the morning of March 10, 1953, military aircraft from Czechoslovakia engaged in "repeated" unauthorized overflights of the border of the U.S. Zone "in circumstances which could not be fairly interpreted as innocent or accidental."

(2) At 9:38 a.m. (Greenwich Mean Time) on March 10, 1953, two U.S. F-84's were dispatched toward the Czech border in order to intercept, identify, and report on unidentified aircraft overflying the U.S. Zone.

(3) Before taking off, "in accordance with the standard practice then obtaining in such cases, the guns of both aircraft /F-84's/ had been rendered inoperative...." /This fact, evidently not previously disclosed in official or journalistic accounts of the incident, provides the answer to queries made at the time as to why the F-84's had not fired back./

(4) At no time did the F-84's cross into Czechoslovakia. /The U.S. note of March 13, 1953, had already stated that U.S.

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351 For texts of the notes exchanged see Department of State Bulletin, March 30, 1953; August 10, 1953; August 30, 1954.

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radarscope data showed conclusively that the F-84's had not crossed the Czech border at any time.7

(5) When the two F-84's reached the border area in which unidentified aircraft from Czechoslovakia had been observed, the overflying aircraft had disappeared from view. The F-84's then were directed to conduct the usual border patrol flight, in the course of which, at approximately 9:59 a.m. (GMT), "unidentified military aircraft were again observed to be flying within Czechoslovakia toward the German border on a bearing which would bring them within one minute directly into and within the United States Zone of Germany." Visual identification of two MiG's, which crossed the border at about 10:00 a.m. (GMT), was made by the U.S. pilots who, however, were not able to identify their nationality.

(6) The MiG's crossed the path of the F-84's over the German town of Kritzenast at about 10:02 a.m. (GMT), while the F-84's, for the purpose of avoiding a collision, were executing a turn carrying them deeper into Germany. At this point the F-84's became separated, and the two MiG's split up too, each following one of the F-84's.

(7) One MiG placed itself directly behind Lt. Brown's F-84, assuming "a hostile and aggressive position, both evading identification and making ready to fire...." Lt. Brown took evasive and defensive action "in ever-tightening counter-

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clockwise circles," but failed to throw off the speedier MiG.

(8) At this point, "several additional MiG aircraft then appeared...coming from Czechoslovakia and responding to Czechoslovak controlling authorities." These MiG's joined with the other MiG in a "concerted, deliberate and hostile action in order to effect the destruction of Lieutenant Brown's aircraft and his death."[352]

(9) The firing against Lt. Brown's F-84 began at about 10:05 a.m. (GMT) near Pemfling, a German town more than 10 miles from the closest point of the Czech border. The attack, initially unsuccessful, was pressed by the MiG's until the F-84 was disabled over the German town of Friedersried, almost 15 miles from the Czech border. Lt. Brown lost control of his aircraft and dived sharply south; the MiG's "nevertheless continued pursuing him." Lt. Brown regained control of his plane and headed farther into Germany. But the pursuing MiG's "reopened fire" over Thiermietnach, more than 18 miles from the Czech border. His aircraft mortally hit this time, Lt. Brown bailed out. "Nevertheless...the pursuing MiG aircraft continued firing, the last firing taking place in the air space

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352 The fact that other MiG's later joined the two original MiG's, it is believed, was not previously disclosed, though it was foreshadowed in some of the inquiries put to the Czech government in the U.S. note of July 29, 1953. Elsewhere in the note of August 18, 1954, as well as in the note of July 29, 1953, the U.S. government by implication raised the possibility that not all of the MiG's taking part in the action against the F-84's had been Czech planes.

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between the German towns of Hofstetten and Sasselberg, twenty and one-half miles from the nearest point of the Czechoslovak border." The MiG's withdrew at about 10:08 a.m. (GMT).

(10) No request to land (as alleged in the Czech note of March 11, 1953) was made to the F-84's. (In this connection, the U.S. note also recalled that the Czech government, in its reply of February 25, 1954, had refused to specify, although duly requested, the signals or the contents of the alleged communication from the Czech aircraft to the American aircraft, or the method by which it was supposed to have been made.)

Significance

The detailed account of the incident presented in the U.S. note of August 18, 1954, and some of the disclosures made for the first time on that occasion, tend to rule out the hypothesis that the Czechs were, on this occasion, merely implementing their air-defense policy. Such a hypothesis had been somewhat more plausible on the basis of the public accounts available shortly after the incident. Until August, the possibility seemed to remain that Czech air-defense personnel might have mistakenly thought that a violation by the F-84's had taken place, even though authoritative statements showed that the entire encounter had taken place over the U.S. Zone. However, the U.S. note of August 28, 1954, showed that the incident took place in a context of repeated communist overflights of the border zone on March 9 and 10.

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It would seem, then, that the communist air force in Czechoslovakia deliberately adopted an aggressive posture, for reasons that are not clear. One possibility is that the Czechs wanted to demonstrate that they had a new, tough air-defense policy. It should be noted that the F-84 incident was the first unmistakable manifestation of a stern Czech air-defense policy similar to that applied over the U.S.S.R. after April, 1950. It is possible that the incident was deliberately staged over German territory, without waiting for an actual violation of Czech air space, because it was thought desirable to demonstrate at this particular time that the Czechs had a tough air-defense policy.

In the light of the previous history and development of Czech-U.S. air-border incidents, the shooting down of the F-84 on March 10, 1953, did not come as a complete surprise. In August and September, 1952, Czech aircraft were reported on several occasions to have flown along their side of the border parallel to U.S. fighters which were engaged in border patrols. U.S. officials at that time drew the conclusion that Czech aircraft would make armed interception against any U.S. aircraft which happened to violate the border. This expectation was very much strengthened in November, 1952, when the Czech Transport Ministry (responsible for civil-air matters) issued a formal warning that aircraft violating Czech air boundaries

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would be forced to land or be shot down.[353]

That the F-84 incident was an implementation of this earlier warning was suggested by the phrasing of the Czech note. The Czechs charged that the F-84's, having made a "violation" of Czech territory, "were requested to land," and that one of the planes was shot down when "this request was not obeyed."[354]

If the F-84 incident was connected in some way with Czech air-defense policy, then the question arises whether it signified the inception of a new policy to be applied by the Czechs in every case of an air-border violation, or whether "an example" was being made in this instance in order to convey dramatically and forcefully the Czech attitude toward overflights. While available evidence is inconclusive in this regard, we lean toward the hypothesis that the F-84 incident did not signify that

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353 Bonn (Donnelly) to Secretary of State, No. 2347, November 21, 1952, citing cable received by USAREUR from U.S. air attaché on November 18 (SC 5311); CONFIDENTIAL.

354 This version of the incident resembles that used in similar cases by the Soviets, with one important exception. The Soviet stereotype always charged the foreign plane with having fired first in response to a request to land. In omitting this charge, the Czech statement in this case was clumsy, because it left the Czech international law position vulnerable to diplomatic attack. In effect, the Czechs overtly claimed the right to shoot down an intruding plane simply if it did not follow instructions to land. While Soviet policy was actually the same, Soviet diplomacy carefully shielded such actions by advancing the additional justification that the foreign plane had fired first. In a subsequent incident (involving two U.S. Navy planes fired upon over Czechoslovakia on March 12, 1954) the Czechs charged the intruding planes with opening fire as well as refusal to land, thus adhering to the earlier Soviet diplomatic stereotype.

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hostile military action would be applied as a matter of routine to all air violations.

Some light is shed on this question by the Czech diplomatic treatment of the incident. At no time during the dispute did the Czech government state that the action against the F-84 on March 10 was taken on the basis of standing instructions.[355] This omission appeared to be significant, the more so with the passage of time. In its note of July 29, the U.S. government explicitly requested "copies of all general and special orders from competent [Czech] authorities to the commanders and the ground radio controllers and to pilots" in effect at the time of the incident, which would illuminate "the circumstances under which such [foreign] aircraft might be attacked, and the circumstances in which overflight of the Czechoslovak-German border by Czechoslovak aircraft was permissible or directed."[356] The U.S. also requested the text of specific instructions given to all Czech fighter pilots with respect to the flights in question on March 10, 1953. These requests, and all others contained in the U.S. note of July 29, 1953, were ignored by the Czech government in its reply of February 25, 1954.

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355 It may be recalled that, in several earlier incidents involving the shooting down of a U.S. plane, and in the case of the Swedish Catalina (June, 1952) as well, the Soviet Foreign Office subsequently stated what were, ostensibly, the air-defense instructions under which its planes had acted.

356 The latter part of this request may be interpreted as an effort to find out whether the Czechs claimed the right of "hot pursuit."

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Possible Political Motivation Behind the Incident

It should be noted that the fact of deliberate Czech excursion into West Germany in order to shoot down the F-84's does not necessarily indicate that the action had a special political or diplomatic motivation. The possibility remains that technical difficulties of intercepting fast-flying jet aircraft in a limited time and space are such that it would have been difficult to intercept and shoot down a jet plane which made a minor violation of Czech territory. Therefore, in order to have an incident to back its earlier warnings, and in order not to have to wait too long for an opportunity to demonstrate their air-defense capability, the Czechs may have decided to lure American planes into a trap at a time and place of their own choosing, even though this meant that the incident might have to be staged on the German side of the border. This explanation is suggested by the fact, as noted earlier, that the U.S. F-84's were sent up to investigate the presence of unidentified aircraft -- presumably violating West German air space -- and were then attacked by the two MiG's.

The possibility of a special political motivation behind the incident, on the other hand, derives some support from the diplomatic and propaganda handling of the incident on the part of the Czechs. The incident was utilized by the Czech regime to support its protests against alleged intervention by the United States in the domestic affairs of Czechoslovakia.

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In this context, the shooting down of the F-84 manifested the Czech government's determination to resist such efforts. The Czech note of March 13 concluded on such a political note:

> American Government authorities must realize that Czechoslovakia is not a Marshallized State, an American colony over which U.S. planes can fly at will, as they do in Western Europe. Every Czechoslovak citizen considers it his most sacred duty to vigilantly guard the freedom, independence and sovereignty of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The incident of March 10 was used for a similar purpose before the U.N. General Assembly in support of the Czech-sponsored motion against the United States' "aggressive intervention" in the domestic affairs of other states. The Czech delegation had asked for the inclusion of this item on the agenda. In a long speech on March 23, Mr. David, Czech foreign minister, made a series of charges against the United States which included a detailed account of U.S. air violations of Czech territory over the previous few years, which he held to have been "systematic and deliberate."[357]

Other political explanations of the F-84 incident emerge if the incident is related to the problem of succession in Soviet leadership following Stalin's death. Such explanations became prominent especially after a British bomber was downed by Soviet MiG's in Germany two days after the F-84 incident.

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357 Some of the instances of alleged U.S. air violations listed by Mr. David had been publicly aired earlier. A Czech broadcast on March 13 had contained similar charges. (See FBIS, Daily Report, March 17, 1953.) These charges are included in separate case studies, in chronological order, in the present report.

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These hypotheses are considered in the case study on the British Lincoln-bomber incident.[358]

In conclusion, we should note here the position taken in the U.S. note of August 18, 1954, with regard to the Czech motive:

> The United States Government charges further that these acts and directions were without provocation or justification whatever;...that they were carried out in an effort to exert terror, threats and illegal force over the area of Germany near the Czechoslovak border, and thereby to make it possible to overfly the United States zone of Germany and other areas unlawfully, at will, for such purposes as espionage, aggrandizement and propaganda demonstrations of strength....

U.S. Diplomatic Handling of Incident

The United States immediately protested the Czech action of March 10 in strong diplomatic language. A preliminary note protesting the shooting down of the F-84 "in strongest terms" was filed in Prague by Ambassador George Wadsworth on the day of the incident. The gravity of the incident was at once emphasized by Dr. James B. Conant, U.S. High Commissioner in Germany, who called it an "outrage" and predicted that U.S. forces in Germany "will know how to deal with any further excursion of this type." Secretary of State Dulles asserted that the United States took "a serious view of the situation."

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358 See case study No. 103.

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However, prior to issuing the fuller protest note of March 13, State Department officials made it clear that they did not contemplate an open break with the Czech government. By this time, too, it was evident that the U.S. military reaction to the incident would be confined to improving the U.S. capability and readiness for taking defensive action against any similar Czech action in the future.

The Czech note of March 11 evidently influenced the formulation of the fuller U.S. protest delivered on March 13. The U.S. note rejected the Czech version of the incident as a "falsification of facts"; it called upon the Czech government for a formal expression of regret, indemnities, and assurance against repetition of such an incident.

The Czech note had given a distorted picture of the history of air-border violations along the Czech-West German border, attempting to portray U.S. forces as engaged in unilateral air violations and the U.S. government as unmindful of Czech protests and warnings. The U.S. note of March 13 refuted these charges in detail and took to task the Czech government for its own attitude toward the problem of air-border violations. The Czechs were reminded that "in the interest of border tranquility and international amity" the United States had always taken strict measures to avoid any air violation of the Czech border. When, despite such measures, inadvertent violations had taken place in the past, the United States had

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acknowledged them and had taken renewed precautions. However, in the great majority of cases, careful investigation by U.S. authorities had shown Czech charges of alleged U.S. air violations to be false. On its side, the United States had not protested repeated Czech violations of the border without careful investigation of the facts. The Czech government was further reminded, in the American note, that on frequent occasions in the past the United States had called the attention of the Czech government to its refusal to recognize air violations by its own planes, and to its failure to state what measures were being taken to prevent such incidents.

Further, the U.S. note disclosed (evidently for the first time) that on August 10, 1951, the U.S. Embassy had finally obtained a statement from the Czech government to the effect that the Czech Air Force was instructed to keep a distance of 20 kilometers from the zonal border; thereafter, the Czech government had admitted several violations by Czech aircraft. The recent incident of March 10, the U.S. note concluded, indicated that the Czech government had reverted to "its previous practice of misrepresentation."

On July 29, another U.S. note was dispatched to the Czech government. It demanded that the Czechs supply detailed information on the shooting down of the U.S. F-84. If such information were not produced, the note continued, the United States "will consider itself entitled to take such further action as it may then find appropriate in this matter."

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On February 25, 1954, the Czech Foreign Office informed the American Embassy at Prague that they "have not replied and do not intend to reply" to the U.S. note of July 29, 1953. The reason given was that the Czech government in its previous notes had already presented sufficient facts to prove that the U.S. planes had violated Czech territory.

The U.S. note of August 18, 1954, already referred to in some detail above, preferred a formal diplomatic claim against the Czech government and demanded payment of damages to the extent of $271,384.16. It invited the Czech government, in the event it contested the validity of the claim, to join in submitting the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The U.S. note charged the Czech government with having knowingly made false statements of fact about the incident.

In charging the Czech government with violations of international law, the United States, in the note of August 18, 1954, conveyed a position of its own regarding the proper treatment of air intruders. The relevant passage was as follows:

> Even if, as is not the fact, the ground authorities in Czechoslovakia or the pilots of the MiG aircraft from Czechoslovakia had erroneously believed that they had intercepted the United States F-84 aircraft within Czechoslovakia, it was the duty of the intercepting aircraft and the duty of the ground controllers to make intelligible signals to the overflying American aircraft, such as by flying across the path of the American aircraft in an easterly direction toward a suitable airfield and directing the aircraft to land at that airfield, or to

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take similar action, to acquaint the overflying aircraft with the fact that they were overflying Czechoslovak territory without prior authorization and should turn and proceed back to the United States Zone of Germany.

U.S. Military Reaction

The incident of March 10 was doubly embarrassing to the U.S. in that neither of the F-84's was able to return the fire of the attacking Czech MiG's. Statements by the U.S. pilots and a USAFE spokesman did not make clear why defensive action was not taken.[359] Indeed, by refraining on security grounds from answering reporters' queries as to why they had not fired upon the MiG's, the U.S. pilots gave the impression that their orders had prevented them from doing so.[360] Later, at the same conference, a USAFE spokesman in Wiesbaden was reported to have stated that the only reason for not returning fire was that the F-84 pilots had had no opportunity to do so. He revealed that U.S. pilots on such patrols "are told to avoid all possible trouble when encountering strange aircraft" but have orders to "fight back if attacked with a clearly hostile act or if it is a matter of saving life." In trying to avoid an incident and in holding their fire, the USAFE spokesman indicated, the F-84 pilots had acted correctly. That

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359 The New York Times, March 12, 1953.

360 USAF (Washington, D.C.) stated that it knew of no directive or instruction to prevent pilots from answering such questions. It speculated that the F-84's were too slow to get into position to return fire. (The /Washington/ Evening Star, March 11, 1953.)

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the guns of the F-84's had been rendered inoperative prior to becoming airborne, "in accordance with standard practice then obtaining in such cases," was evidently not disclosed until the U.S. note of August 18, 1954.

Public statements following the incident gave a somewhat contradictory impression of U.S. air-defense policy over West Germany, and did not make clear whether it was changed following the incident. It was not clear under what conditions U.S. fighters could resort to force in coping with air intruders. One account implied that, even before the F-84 incident, U.S. patrol planes intercepting alien craft over U.S.-controlled territory were to lead them to an American landing field and to enforce landing orders with gunfire in case of resistance.[361] Another account indicated that new instructions, presumably tougher than the earlier ones, had been issued following the March 10 incident.[362] But a USAFE statement reported by the New York Times on March 14, 1953, indicated that U.S. pilots, even after the F-84 incident, were permitted to fire back only when attacked, but not to initiate aggressive action against unidentified planes discovered over the U.S. Zone. The character of U.S. air-defense policy at the time of the F-84 incident was clarified to some extent in the following passage of the U.S. note of August 18, 1954:

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361 The Washington Post, March 11, 1953.
362 The (Washington) Evening Star, March 13, 1953.

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> At all times, before and on March 10, 1953, the pilots of such interceptor aircraft were under instructions under no circumstances to cross the border of Germany, and the persons controlling their movements were under instructions under no circumstances to permit the border to be crossed, or to engage in violence or force in effecting interception or identification. /Underlining added./

Immediately following the March 10 incident, the U.S. 12th Air Force in Germany announced that it did not intend to alter the pattern of patrol missions. On March 13, USAF announced that twenty-five Sabre jets (F-86's), which were planes with higher performance capability than the F-84's, would soon be sent to Germany from the United States. On March 16, however, it was announced that U.S. Sabre jets had been shifted to Germany on temporary duty from England.[363]

On another point, too, public accounts initially gave a confused picture of the U.S. military reaction to the March 10 incident. On March 13, it was reported by the New York Times that, unlike the 2nd Tactical Air Force in Northern Germany under British command, the U.S. 12th Air Force had not received instructions to stay ten miles away from the East German or Czechoslovak frontiers. The USAFE spokesman added that there was no "off limits" area for U.S. fliers along the Czech border, but that generally pilots kept well away from that frontier. On the following day (March 14) a USAFE spokesman in Wiesbaden stated in the same vein that pilots patrolling the German-Czech

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363 The New York Times, March 17, 1953.

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border had been instructed "not to give an inch"; they would continue to fly up to the Czech border in carrying out their duties.

On March 19, however, USAFE announced that it had banned its planes from flying within thirty miles of communist East Germany and Czechoslovakia, except on border defense missions or authorized flights in Soviet-recognized air corridors. At the same time, the U.S. Air Force statement asserted that "these regulations have been in effect well over a year" but were "reaffirmed today."

Thus, apparently, the March 10 incident did not really lead to any change in policy governing U.S. flights near the Czech border, even though public accounts on this point may have conveyed the impression that curbs were belatedly instituted following the shooting down of the F-84.

It should be noted, finally, that neither the U.S. Air Force nor the State Department took any overt recognition of the Czech government's assertion (in its note of March 11) that the U.S. Embassy in Prague had earlier assured it that U.S. pilots "of particularly fast aircraft are prohibited.../from flying/ in a ten-mile-wide strip along the Czechoslovak frontier."

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103. BRITISH LINCOLN BOMBER SHOT DOWN AND TWO OTHER PLANES BUZZED BY SOVIET MIG'S OVER GERMANY[364] (March 12, 1953)

On March 12, 1953, within a matter of less than twelve hours, three British planes, on separate flights over Germany, were intercepted by Soviet MiG's.

(1) In the first incident, a British bomber of the Lincoln type was subjected to a mock attack by two MiG's. Allied sources placed the attack "over the town of Kassel," which is well inside West Germany.

(2) The second incident, less than two hours later, resulted in the shooting down of another Lincoln bomber. According to initial Allied accounts, the British plane was flying in the Hamburg-Berlin air corridor, and the attack took place near the zonal frontier between the British Zone and East Germany.

(3) Less than six hours after the second incident, a British European Airlines Viking commercial passenger plane was intercepted and fired upon by Soviet MiG's while en route from Munich to Berlin.

The two Lincoln bombers had been brought in from England for a training flight over Germany. The second plane was making a flight from Leconfield, an RAF gunnery training station in Yorkshire, England. British "aviation sources" in Lüneburg,

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364 Only unclassified sources on the March 12, 1953, incidents were available for this analysis.

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Germany, stated that the crew of this Lincoln bomber, unfamiliar with German terrain, may have made a brief unintentional violation.[365] A British Foreign Office spokesman emphasized: "We have no reason to think that this British aircraft had deviated from the corridor in any material way. A warning would have been fair enough...."[366] Later, Prime Minister Churchill also conceded that the British plane "may through a navigational error have accidentally crossed into the Eastern Zone of Germany at some point." But he asserted that the plane was "actually over our Zone when first and mortally fired upon."[367]

According to the Soviet account (Chuikov protest letter of March 13), on the other hand, the Lincoln bomber was guilty of a considerable violation of the border; "it penetrated 120 kilometers (72 miles) into the German Democratic Republic territory" on the line Boizenburg-Parchin-Rostock.

The British plane was subjected to sustained attack by the Soviet MiG's. According to the published account of the incident, the main wreckage of the plane fell burning just across the Elbe River, the zonal frontier, near the East German town of Boizenburg; other debris dropped into the British

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365 The New York Times, March 13, 1953.

366 The (Washington) Evening Star, March 13, 1953.

367 The New York Times, March 18, 1953. Mr. Churchill's account contained what may have been a discrepancy. Initial information on the incident had stated that the Lincoln bomber was flying in the Hamburg-Berlin air corridor. Mr. Churchill, however, stated that its prescribed course ran parallel to the Soviet Zone boundary and forty miles on the British side of it. As in initial accounts, Churchill also stated that the plane was on a routine training flight, adding that it was engaged in exercises of a kind which had been carried out for eighteen months.

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Zone on the west bank, about 30 miles southeast of Hamburg. Two crewmen parachuted into British territory, but they, as well as the single survivor who fell into Soviet hands, died shortly thereafter, bringing the total death toll to seven, the entire crew.

Significance

The occurrence of three air incidents in Germany on the same day, only two days after the shooting down of the U.S. F-84 near the German-Czech border, immediately suggested that the Soviet attacks were part of a pattern. And the firing upon a U.S. RB-50 by Soviet MiG's off Kamchatka three days later reinforced that speculation. The quick succession of five incidents in five days -- perhaps an unprecedented concentration of such incidents since World War II -- seemed at first glance to point to a more hostile Soviet attitude on the part of Stalin's successors than had been the case before then.

On the other hand, the Soviet government conveyed a conciliatory attitude in its diplomatic handling of the incidents, especially with respect to the British Lincoln bomber shot down on March 12. Not only did the Soviets invite the three Western powers in Germany to an air-safety conference for the ostensible purpose of eliminating similar incidents in the

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future, but the Soviet version of the facts of the incidents gave subtle indications of a possible modification of the severe air-defense policy of the late Stalin era, 1950-1953.

The Air Incidents as an Indicator of New Soviet Policies

Stalin died on March 5, 1953. Among the first concrete indications of his successors' outlook on foreign policy was the unprecedented succession of air incidents in mid-March. On the surface, the incidents seemed to betoken a new policy of greater toughness and aggressiveness on the part of the new regime. However, it was not immediately clear, and perhaps it never will be determined, whether the incidents were deliberately staged at this time, either for calculated effect on the Western powers or, possibly, as an assertion of communist strength for internal purposes. The possibility cannot be excluded that the timing of some or most of the incidents was fortuitous. Although occurring so closely in time, these incidents may have been isolated occurrences rather than part of a deliberate policy of hostile pinpricks against the West.

The likelihood that the incidents indicated a tougher attitude on the part of the new Soviet regime is much reduced when it is recalled that, for several years preceding Stalin's death, Soviet air-defense policy had been quite hostile. From an intelligence standpoint, it is useful to consider systematically to what extent the five mid-March incidents can be

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accounted for in terms of the air-defense policy of the late Stalin era. Such intelligence exercises are handicapped by the difficulty of ascertaining the facts, and of knowing just what was believed to have taken place by the Soviets, and, in some cases, by Western personnel. With these difficulties in mind, an analysis of the five incidents in the context of the post-1950 severe Soviet policy yields the following alternative interpretations:

1. The five mid-March incidents can be explained in large part by postulating no more than a continuation of the air-defense policies of the late Stalin era.
2. A small but quite probable increase in aggressiveness was manifested by Soviet air defense. There may have been a general order to Soviet military forces issued by Stalin's successors immediately after taking over. This general order may have gone no further than to enjoin defending forces to exercise special vigilance in implementing standing instructions in case of foreign encroachments of any kind. As a result, border defense forces may have been more sensitive to possible air violations, and, in case a violation was thought to have occurred, they may have implemented their instructions for military counter-action somewhat more sharply and aggressively than usual.

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3. It is unlikely that the new Soviet regime introduced a substantially tougher air-defense policy; for example, a policy calling on Soviet fighter planes to violate common ground frontiers with the West in order to harass Western planes. Rather is it likely that one result of the March incidents themselves may have been the introduction of a somewhat less severe Soviet air-defense policy than had been in effect during Stalin's later years.

The data and reasoning on which these alternative inferences are based are as follows below.

1. There is little difficulty in explaining several of these mid-March air incidents in terms of the air-defense policy of the late Stalin era.

The shooting down of the British Lincoln bomber, which admittedly violated East German territory, was not without precedent. Soviet fighters had fired with hostile intent, it may be recalled, upon an Air France plane on April 27, 1952, and upon a U.S. unmarked hospital plane on October 8, 1952. The significance of those two incidents, particularly the first one, in terms of the hostile policy behind them was not immediately apparent because neither plane was shot down. The successful implementation of hostile intent against the British Lincoln bomber was, therefore, only a more dramatic and unmistakable

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manifestation of the same Soviet policy that gave rise to the earlier incidents. Moreover, the impact on the West was especially great because this was the first Allied plane shot down by the Soviets over Germany and because seven British airmen lost their lives.

Several aspects of the British Lincoln-bomber incident, on the other hand, remain obscure and may possibly indicate a Soviet air-defense attitude even more severe than the one in force when Stalin was alive. If, as alleged by the Soviets (Chuikov note of March 13), the British plane had made a gross violation of East German territory, then the Soviet hostile action against it was in line with the two earlier actions in 1952. However, if, as claimed by the British, the Lincoln bomber made only a minor violation, then it is possible that the Soviet action was tougher than in the case of earlier violations. (It may be recalled that, earlier, the Soviets had seemed to assert the right of hostile action against air intruders in Germany only in the event of "gross" violations; minor violations had been frequent and had not encountered hostile action.)

Secondly, considering that the British plane flew back toward the British Zone and did not return fire, the Soviet fighters pressed their attack against it in a highly aggressive and ruthless fashion. In fact, according to an account of the incident given by Winston Churchill, the Soviet fighters pursued the British plane across the border and finally downed it on the British side of the boundary. The question naturally

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arises, therefore, whether the Soviets were asserting the right of "hot pursuit." That they were doing so is not very likely, however, in view of the possibility that the Soviet fighters unknowingly pursued the British plane for a short distance into the British Zone. It is perhaps significant, too, that the Soviet note on the incident not only did not assert the right of hot pursuit; it also did not even admit that Soviet planes crossed into the British Zone.

The Kamchatka incident of March 15 is even more easily accounted for on the basis of the late-Stalin-era policy toward air intruders and close perimeter flights.[368] While this appears to have been the first incident of its kind in the Kamchatka area,[369] U.S. planes venturing close to Soviet territorial waters elsewhere had been subjected to hostile fire on many previous occasions. Some of these earlier incidents, especially those resulting in fatalities, had been publicized. Hence, even if the Soviet MiG's went beyond their twelve-mile territorial-waters limit to attack the U.S. RB-50, as claimed by official U.S. accounts, this would probably not signify an intensification of the late-Stalin-era practice; for, available information on earlier incidents strongly suggests that the Soviets had tended to interpret the twelve-mile limit liberally

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368 See case study No. 104.

369 According to a USAF spokesman (The Washington Post, March 18, 1953), there had been prior Soviet attempts at interception of, though no previous attacks on, U.S. flights in this area. Therefore, this may well have been the first occasion on which Soviet MiG's actually had the opportunity to intercept and fire upon planes in the Kamchatka and Northwest Pacific area.

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in challenging unidentified planes, especially those thought to be engaged in hostile reconnaissance. Finally, it may be noted, an incident of this type -- which did not result in fatalities -- would not normally have been publicized by U.S. sources. In this case, special considerations evidently dictated a public disclosure of the incident.[370] Otherwise the incident, a "routine" one from both the Soviet and U.S. standpoints, would not have been available for public speculation concerning the motives of the new Soviet regime.

2. Despite the discussion immediately above, there remain several of the mid-March air incidents that cannot be easily subsumed under the late-Stalin-era policy. Rather do they indicate a slight increase in the aggressiveness with which the Stalin-period policy was applied.

Of the five mid-March incidents, the shooting down of the U.S. F-84 by Czech MiG's over northern Bavaria is the one which is most likely to have been the result of a special top-level political decision to intensify hostile policy toward foreign planes.[371] Available information suggests that the Czech planes must have knowingly crossed into Bavaria in order to down the U.S. F-84, which did not commit any violation. If this is the case, the incident has no precedent in Stalin-era incidents. Earlier instances in which Soviet planes may have

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370 These are discussed in case study No. 104.
371 See case study No. 102.

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deliberately gone out of their way to attack Allied planes took place over international waters, never over Allied-controlled territory.

On the other hand, the significance of the F-84 incident in this respect may be somewhat less great than appears at first glance. Even if deliberately staged by the Czechs over the U.S. Zone of Germany, the incident seems to have been an individual action in line with late-Stalin-era developments. For such an incident was clearly foreshadowed by Czech air actions during 1952; and, in fact, an explicit diplomatic warning to U.S. officials by the Czech government, in November, 1952, stated that thenceforth intruding planes would be forced to land and would be shot down if they resisted. Therefore, an incident of this character may have been planned for some time to demonstrate that the diplomatic warning was not mere bluff. The staging of the incident over the U.S. Zone may have been necessary for technical purposes, i.e., the difficulty of making an interception against fast-flying jets which actually do violate the border briefly.[372]

Yet the possibility cannot be excluded that the timing of the F-84 incident was indeed connected with post-Stalin policy calculations. The political exploitation given the incident by the Czech government lends some support to this possibility. Thus, in addition to its rather obvious intention of dissuading

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372 See case study No. 102.

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the United States from continuing border flights (a long-standing Czech concern), the incident may have had the more general political purpose of demonstrating the vigilance of the Czech communist government to any effort at outside intervention following Stalin's death.

In the last analysis, however, whatever the relationship of the F-84 incident to post-Stalin communist foreign policy, the Czech action appears to have been an isolated one taken on the basis of special instructions. It does not seem likely that standing instructions were issued to Czech air-defense forces calling for similar hostile action against any and all possible air intruders.

The third incident over Germany, on March 12, 1953, also does not easily fit the late-Stalin-era pattern for treatment of alleged air intruders. In that case, the British commercial plane, a Viking, admittedly violated the southern Berlin air corridor. The depth of the penetration into East German territory was not given by either side, the Soviet account contenting itself with the charge that the Viking flew a distance of about 150 kilometers outside of the corridor "in the direction of Soemmerda, Naumburg and Leipzig."[373]

According to British accounts, the Viking was fired upon not directly but for purposes of warning. (Official protest notes to the Soviets implied a more sober view of the nature of

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373 Chuikov letter, March 19, 1953.

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the fire to which the plane was subjected, but this may have been for purposes of diplomatic emphasis. The Soviet account did not explicitly admit the firing; it stated merely that the British plane had been "warned by generally customary signals" from Soviet patrol aircraft.

As a matter of fact, firing for purposes of warning was not at all customary for violations of the Berlin air corridors.[374] The possibility suggests itself, therefore, that the action against the Viking was taken on the basis of a new, post-Stalin directive requiring that warning fire be directed against Allied aircraft making minor violations of the air corridors. This inference would not hold if it turned out that the British plane had made what the Soviets considered to be a gross violation. In that event, the most likely explanation would be that the Soviet air-defense command in Germany did not in that instance apply the full penalty for gross violations -- i.e., forcing or shooting down the offending plane -- because the Lincoln bomber had been shot down just five hours earlier. (It is possible that Soviet air-defense instructions in Germany in the late Stalin era called for avoiding more than one fatal incident within a given time period and for resorting to warning

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[374] Quadripartite air regulations, dating back to 1946, forbade resort to fire for any purpose in the case of suspected violations. As far as is known, despite the Soviet reference to "customary" warning signals, this was the first occasion on which the Soviets referred to such a practice. It was also one of the few cases, if not the first, on which they resorted to warning fire to signal a plane back into the corridor.

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fire as a substitute. This latter possibility seems more likely than a new, post-Stalin policy calling for warning fire against minor air-corridor violations.)

Even more ambiguous than the two incidents discussed above was the first of the three incidents over Germany on March 12. The Soviet and Allied accounts of this incident are so contradictory that it is not even clear that they refer to the same air encounter. According to the Allied account, a British Lincoln bomber (not the one shot down a few hours later) was subjected to a mock attack by two MiG's over Kassel, which is well inside of West German territory. The Soviets denied that any of their planes had been over Kassel and, instead, referred to a "violation" of the southern air corridor by a British plane of the York type. The Soviet account alleged a penetration of fifteen kilometers (9.3 miles) and stated that "customary warning signals" had been given by intercepting Soviet aircraft in order to direct the York plane back into the corridor.[375] Whether, as in the Viking incident later in the same day, the "customary warning signals" had taken the form of warning fire, it is not possible to say. Neither the British nor the Soviet account of this incident mentioned that the Soviet aircraft had fired on the Lincoln -- or York -- plane.

A Soviet "mock attack" on the British plane over Kassel, with or without warning fire, could be interpreted as indicating

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375 Chuikov letter, March 19, 1953.

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an even more extensive air-defense policy than that of the late Stalin era, if we assume that Soviet planes in question knowingly violated the border. If this interpretation is true, it would appear that post-Stalin directives authorized air forays across the borders within Germany, even though these foreign forays may have been limited to nonhostile action. On the other hand, in the Soviet version, the incident was portrayed in a more conventional and less aggressive way, in terms that were more in keeping with Stalin-era policies.

Also, in inviting the British to an air-safety conference, the Soviet note of March 19 referred cryptically to "the present speeds of aircraft" (presumably jets) as making such talks expedient.[376] Since only Soviet jets had been involved in the three incidents of March 12, it is possible that the allusion in question was intended as an indirect explanation or excuse for boundary transgressions that may have been committed by Soviet MiG's in pursuing the ill-fated Lincoln bomber into the British Zone and in coming over Kassel in the earlier mock attack against another British plane. In other words, the Soviet reference in this context to "present speeds of aircraft" may

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376 The relevant passage in Chuikov's letter of March 19 to the British High Commissioner reads as follows: "In view of the need to safeguard in the future the safety of aircraft during flights, and to remove further misunderstandings in this connection, I express the wish that an appropriate conference by competent military representatives of the USSR and Great Britain might meet in Berlin. Such a conference seems to me all the more useful, inasmuch as the present speeds of aircraft would make it expedient to discuss and resolve jointly concrete measures aimed at guaranteeing the observance of the regulations laid down for the aircraft, and thus preventing undesirable air incidents."

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have been a veiled assurance to the Western powers that its own air violations on March 12 -- which, characteristically, it would not openly acknowledge -- did not signify a new, more aggressive air policy on its part.

3. In sum, if indeed there was a shift toward a tougher air policy under new Soviet leadership immediately following Stalin's death, such a shift was not as far-reaching as the concatenation of air incidents in mid-March seemed to indicate. To some extent, these incidents were fortuitous and unrelated; that is, some of them probably occurred in implementation of Soviet air-defense instructions which had been in force for some time prior to Stalin's death. A few of the incidents -- or, at least, their more bellicose aspects -- may have reflected a general directive by the new regime to its armed forces calling for greater vigilance and more energetic implementation of standing defense instructions. But the possibility cannot be excluded that the new regime also put into effect new and somewhat more forward measures for dealing with minor air violations over Germany. It is also possible that the Czech action against the U.S. F-84 was intended in part as a demonstration of communist willingness to resort to military force in order to defend the Satellite countries against any excursions which the U.S. might initiate for purposes of probing and exploiting post-Stalin confusion and weaknesses.

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Possible Modification of Air-Defense Policy of Late Stalin Era

As actions, the mid-March air incidents conveyed an unmistakably tough Soviet attitude, possibly going beyond that previously displayed toward alleged air intruders in the late Stalin era. However, the subsequent diplomatic handling of the incidents by the new Soviet regime gave quite a different impression of their attitude.

There are several possible explanations of the striking difference between the severity of the actions themselves and the conciliatory tone and content of Soviet diplomatic communications on the matter of the incidents. The hypothesis favored by the present writer is as follows: The severe (late Stalin era) air-defense policy was in effect for a short while following Stalin's death in early March. This policy may have been further toughened, intentionally or unwittingly, by instructions issued by the new regime in the days immediately after Stalin's death. However, the new Soviet leaders were disagreeably surprised by the rash of air incidents in mid-March, and were concerned over the political consequences of the incidents. These incidents, especially the shooting down of the British Lincoln bomber, may have pressed upon the new regime, heretofore preoccupied with other problems, the necessity for immediate reconsideration of the old air-defense policy in order to bring it in line with the general tactical shift toward the "softer" policy toward the West which was probably already being

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considered and was about ready to unfold. Indeed, the unique Soviet expression of regret that British lives were lost in the Lincoln-bomber incident and the invitation to engage in discussions aimed at preventing similar incidents in the future were among the first in a series of conciliatory gestures toward the West on the part of the new regime.

This hypothesis finds support in the following considerations:

A. Soviet diplomatic communications on the mid-March incidents yield evidence of unprecedented concern over the impact of such actions on Western audiences.

In earlier, fatal air incidents, in which hostile Soviet intent was completely successful, a highly stereotyped version of the incidents was given in Soviet diplomatic communications: the allegedly intruding plane was intercepted by Soviet fighters and asked to land; the intruding plane not only failed to comply with this request but opened fire on the Soviet planes, which were therefore obliged to return fire.[377] The basic stereotype, it may be noted, itself contains a justification of Soviet resort to fire -- i.e., the allegation that the intruding plane

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377 This stereotype, applied in amended form to cases in which the foreign plane escaped total destruction, was closely patterned on Soviet air-defense instructions publicly disclosed on several occasions. According to these instructions, when a violation occurs, Soviet airmen are to "force" the intruding plane to land on Soviet territory and, "in the event of resistance, to open fire on it."

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refused to land and opened fire. The extent to which additional justificatory details are added to this stereotype, it is postulated here, provides a convenient and probably reliable barometer of the degree of concern felt by Soviet leaders as to the possible political impact and consequences of their action.[378]

The extent to which justificatory detail was added to the Soviet note on the ill-fated British Lincoln bomber was unprecedented. Thus, according to the Soviet account, the British plane was intercepted and asked to land (only) after it "continued to fly further into German Democratic Republic territory," that is, after having already made a gross violation. As in the basic stereotype, the Soviet account further alleged that the British plane fired first, but Soviet fighters responded to this (only) with warning fire; they fired directly at the British plane only when it continued to fire upon them. Further, in an unprecedented effort to lend credibility to the claim that the British plane had fired its guns, the Soviet note claimed that armaments and "used cartridges" had been found in the wreck of the British plane.

The Soviet version of the Kamchatka incident also contained unusual justifications of the Soviet action. Thus, it was allegedly (only) the second violation of Kamchatka territory by the U.S. B-50 to which Soviet air defense reacted. The Soviet

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378 This point is further developed in RAND Research Memorandum RM-1348, "Intelligence Value of Soviet Notes on Air Incidents, 1950-1953" (CONFIDENTIAL).

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note implied, further, that the Soviet counteraction against the B-50 took place (only?) because its violation of Kamchatka was "clearly premeditated" and not accidental.

B. Soviet diplomatic communications on the mid-March incidents also indicated a reluctance on the part of the new regime to subscribe publicly to the severe air-defense policy of April, 1950 to March, 1953.

The changes in diplomatic phraseology introduced at this time may have been intended merely to propitiate the Western powers and to minimize the possibility that they might directly challenge Soviet air-defense policy as such.

On the other hand, these verbal changes may also have been intended to veil a real modification of Soviet air-defense policy, a modification quickly decided upon by the new regime in Moscow following the tension-producing Lincoln-bomber incident of March 12.

The indications found in Soviet diplomatic communications are admittedly inconclusive as regards a real change in air policy. These clues should be crosschecked, of course, against other types of information on Soviet air-defense policy following Stalin's death. The possibility of a veiled modification of Soviet air-defense policy should be given careful consideration. For there would be important advantages from the Soviet standpoint to carrying out such a modification unilaterally, without explicitly and formally disclosing the

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retreat. Not only would a veiled modification spare the Soviets a cold-war defeat, but, in the absence of any overt or formal commitment to a more moderate air-defense policy, the Soviets would be unencumbered should they wish on some future occasion to reintroduce severe air-defense measures.

On three earlier occasions, after shooting down Western planes, the Soviet government, in official diplomatic communications, explicitly disclosed what were purportedly its standing instructions to Soviet air-defense forces.[379] In no case after Stalin's death, however, have these standing instructions been repeated in full.

In the British Lincoln-bomber case, the Soviet note reproduced these instructions only in part, saying that the British plane had been requested to land, "according to regulations of the Soviet Air Force...." Omitted, however, was the more offensive provision that if, when requested to land, an intruding plane "resisted," Soviet fighters were to fire upon it. Since the Soviet note in question was issued after the strong British reaction to the incident, the omission just noted may have reflected an awareness by the new Soviet leaders of the desirability of moderating the old policy, or at least a certain indecision on their part as to the wisdom of reasserting publicly the severe air policy of the late Stalin era.

Since the British Lincoln-bomber case, the Soviets have not made an explicit statement of their air-defense instructions.

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379 These three occasions were the Baltic incident of April 8, 1950, the Swedish Catalina incident of June 16, 1952, and the U.S. RB-29 incident off Hokkaido on October 7, 1952.

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Therefore, it is appropriate to examine closely the Soviet version of the facts of subsequent air incidents for any possible clues as to a modification in the earlier air-defense policy.

Several days after the Soviet note on the British Lincoln-bomber incident -- presumably after additional reflection as to the desirability of continuing the earlier air-defense policy -- Soviet authorities issued a second note. This referred to all three incidents of March 12 over Germany and, in doing so, introduced an entirely new diplomatic phraseology. In describing the action of Soviet fighters in the two nonfatal incidents of March 12, the Soviet note said nothing about a "request to land" to the allegedly intruding British aircraft, a phrase which had been connected with the earlier hostile Soviet air-defense policy. Instead, the Soviet note stated that the two British planes in question had been given "customary warning signals," presumably to get them to rectify their error. As a matter of fact, despite the reference to "customary" on this occasion, to give warning signals was not customary Soviet behavior in such cases, as has been noted above. Therefore, from the new diplomatic phraseology on this occasion we may tentatively infer that a new nonhostile policy was being introduced, and that the term "customary" was simply a device for veiling or blurring the change.

Several days later, in giving its version of the facts of the Kamchatka incident, the Soviet government avoided altogether

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the earlier stereotype which, as noted above, it had only partly reproduced in the British Lincoln-bomber case. This time the Soviet note did not even state that the Soviet fighters which intercepted the U.S. plane asked it to land. The last remnant of the stereotype associated with the severe air-defense policy of the late Stalin era was abandoned.

Similar indications of a real, though veiled, modification of Soviet air-defense policy appeared in the Soviet diplomatic version of the B-50 incident of July 29, 1953, off Vladivostok.[380]

C. Accounts made public thus far on the four-power air-safety talks held in Berlin strengthen the impression derived from Soviet diplomatic communications that the new Soviet leaders were disposed to make a real modification of the earlier air-defense policy, at least with respect to air violations over Germany.[381] The talks were held under conditions of secrecy. It was evident from public accounts, however, that the Soviet negotiators were attempting to get as much as possible from the three Western powers in return for any commitment to modify their practices.

Agreement was reported between the Soviets and the Western powers on a system of signaling between planes. If a plane deviated slightly from its authorized air space, it was to be shepherded back to its air lane. If a plane should trespass too

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380 See case study No. 111.

381 The major source used here is the summary account of the negotiations in the New York Times, September 21, 1953.

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deeply, both sides were reported as agreeing that it should be ordered to land. One of the points which remained at issue was to define more exactly when a plane would be considered too far off course and when only slightly so. The Russians, according to the account in the New York Times, apparently wanted to leave this undefined. The Times did not comment on the advantages that would accrue to the Soviets if they were free to decide when a gross deviation was being made.

On the important question of whether gunfire was to be permitted as a means of signaling, the Times account reported that in the new system the Russians "appear" to have renounced gunfire for this purpose.

There was no mention in the Times report of what would or could happen if a plane accused of a violation did not obey signals to land. The air-defense policy of the late Stalin era, it may be recalled, asserted that "in case of resistance" an intruding plane which did not obey a request to land was to be fired upon.

At one stage, the Soviet negotiators proposed that the three 20-mile-wide air corridors then in use be consolidated into one broader air corridor. The ostensible reason for the change, as given by the Soviets, was that this would reduce the likelihood of air violations and of incidents. If the Soviet proposal were accepted, however, it would reduce opportunities available to the Allies to observe East Germany from the air

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corridors. This was probably a concealed motive behind the Soviet proposal. In any event, the Western powers were reported as having apparently rejected the Soviet proposal for a single corridor on the ground that it would lengthen flight routes.

104. U.S. RB-50 FIRED UPON BY SOVIET MIG'S OFF KAMCHATKA[382] (March 15, 1953)

On March 15, 1953, a U.S. RB-50 was fired upon by a Soviet MiG off the Siberian peninsula of Kamchatka. The RB-50 returned fire and took evasive action; the MiG, one of two which made the interception, broke off the attack. Neither plane was damaged.

According to the official U.S. Air Force announcement, the incident took place 25 miles east of Kamchatka. The RB-50 was said to have been on a routine weather reconnaissance mission. According to an official spokesman, such missions are regularly flown into the same general area where the RB-50 was attacked.[383]

The attack took place in daylight, at 12:30 p.m. (local time in Kamchatka area).

The incident was initially disclosed by the U.S. Air Force on March 17. Announcement of the incident was delayed, it was explained by Pentagon spokesmen, until the Department of State could be notified.

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382 This study utilizes only public accounts of the incident. The interpretation, however, draws upon classified materials.

383 The New York Times, March 18, 1953. See also detailed account of incident given by the pilot of the RB-50, Washington Evening Star, March 18, 1953.

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The attack was officially protested by the U.S. on March 18.[384] A Soviet note of March 21 rejected the U.S. protest as without foundation and gave a different version of the incident. Alleging that the RB-50 had violated Soviet territory and had opened fire, the Soviet note called upon the U.S. government to prevent further occurrences of this type.[385] On March 24, a State Department press statement rejected the Soviet account as a "fabrication" and reiterated the position taken in the U.S. note of March 18.[386] There has been no further diplomatic exchange on the matter.

Significance

Soviet Motive

Coming shortly after a series of air incidents in Germany, the present incident reinforced speculation that a new air policy had been adopted by the Soviet leaders who succeeded Stalin.

The Kamchatka incident, however, hardly constitutes an indication of changes in Soviet air policy or of post-Stalin political maneuvers. For similar incidents had occurred on many occasions in the Stalin era. U.S. planes venturing close to Soviet territorial waters had, for some years, been subjected

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384 The New York Times, March 19, 1953.
385 FBIS, Daily Report, March 24, 1953.
386 The New York Times, March 25, 1953.

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to hostile interception, i.e., they had been shot at and sometimes downed.

Such incidents had not previously occurred off Kamchatka, however. According to a USAF spokesman, Soviet attempts at interception of U.S. planes had occurred in this area, but U.S. planes had not actually been attacked.[387] Therefore, this may well have been the first occasion on which Soviet MiG's had a good opportunity to fire upon U.S. planes in this area. The attack took place in good weather and visibility.

The facts of the encounter were, as often in previous cases, disputed by the contestants. The official U.S. account held that the RB-50 was no closer than 25 miles to Kamchatka. But this, in itself, does not signify a departure from the Stalin air-defense policy. Even if the Soviet MiG's ventured beyond the 12-mile territorial-waters limit claimed by the Soviet government to attack the RB-50, this would not signify a departure from Stalin-era policy and practice. Even in previous incidents it is likely that the Soviets interpreted broadly their claimed 12-mile territorial-waters limit in challenging unidentified planes, especially those thought to be engaged in hostile reconnaissance.

It is most likely that the Soviet attack upon the RB-50 in this instance resulted from operational implementation of

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387 The Washington Post, March 18, 1953. Hanson Baldwin added that Soviet MiG's had been encountered on both of the Arctic flanks off the Kamchatka and Chukotsk Peninsula in Siberia, and directly across the Norwegian frontier near Murmansk (The New York Times, March 22, 1953).

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long-standing and familiar air-defense instructions. Its occurrence shortly after Stalin's death and in conjunction with a series of air incidents over Germany probably was purely fortuitous.[388]

U.S. Disclosure Policy

If the United States had not disclosed this incident on March 17, it is likely that the Soviets themselves would not have taken the initiative to protest or disclose it.

This judgment is based on a careful analysis of disclosure practices followed by the United States and the Soviet Union in previous air-border clashes. Generally speaking, the Soviets protest an air violation -- that is, taken the initiative in doing so -- only as a substitute for military counteraction against the intruding plane. Where Soviet forces do take some military action against an intruding plane, the Soviet government does not protest diplomatically as a general rule, unless the incident is first publicized by U.S. (or Allied) sources. The rule of thumb followed by the Soviets, therefore, appears to be as follows: actions not only speak louder than words, but they are preferable to words; and words are not needed when action itself conveys the Soviet attitude toward violation of what the U.S.S.R. conceives to be its rights or interests.

This Soviet approach to disclosure is not always immediately evident to the outside observer, however, because it usually

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388 See also case studies Nos. 103 and 111.

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happens that U.S. sources promptly disclose air incidents. The present case is of some value for confirming the hypothesis regarding Soviet attitudes toward disclosure in that, on this occasion, U.S. disclosure of the incident took place only after some delay. Presumably, had the Soviets had some special reason for making a diplomatic protest and/or publicizing the incident. they would have had time enough to do so in this case before the U.S. announcement was finally made. There have been cases in which the Soviets filed a diplomatic protest on the day following the air incident. The fact that they took no such action in this case supports the thesis that, especially in air encounters where, as in the present case, neither side suffers mortal loss, the Soviets do not take the initiative in making disclosure, either via diplomatic or via propaganda communications.

The preceding background information on Soviet disclosure policy would have been relevant in deciding whether the United States should initiate public disclosure of the Kamchatka incident. According to the press, the Pentagon and the State Department differed on the advisability of making a public announcement of the incident:

> The State Department had the bare facts of the Kamchatka clash early Monday [March 16], it was learned, and advised caution in announcing the event because neither the attacking MiG-15 nor the defending B-50 suffered human casualties or any apparent damage.[389]

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[389] The (Washington) Evening Star, March 18, 1953.

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Other considerations motivating the State Department's recommendation, as summarized by the Star, were as follows:

> (1) Silence by Washington might help to smoke out Russian intentions. (2) Publicity could weaken the psychological impact of the strong United States and British protests in recent days over the unopposed shooting down of two allied aircraft over Germany.[390]

However, the Star account continued, "The Pentagon won the decision to announce the Kamchatka affair...after maintaining the military view that it would be better to get out the factual story before Moscow could use a perverted version for propaganda purposes or to exert diplomatic pressure."[391]

The expectation that Moscow might take the initiative in making public disclosure, however, did not take into account the pattern and attitudes implicit in Moscow's handling of earlier incidents. The expectation held by the Pentagon, according to the press account cited, would have been justified only if there had been some basis for assuming that Moscow might have unusual reasons in that case for wanting to publicize the incident. The Star's account of the Pentagon's views is not illuminating in this respect, but it is possible independently to think of one or two special considerations which might have led Moscow in this instance to violate its own rule (or habit) of not initiating disclosure. Thus, Moscow might have reasoned that the flight of the RB-50, so close to Siberia and so far

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390 The (Washington) Evening Star, March 18, 1953.
391 Ibid.

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from U.S. territory, would provide excellent propaganda material for discrediting the United States and for countering any unfortunate impression created by the then recent shooting down by communist planes of the U.S. F-84 and the British Lincoln bomber over Germany. Such propaganda would have been effective, it might have been thought, since Moscow could plausibly have charged that the RB-50 was engaged in reconnaissance of Soviet territory.

The full significance of the U.S. decision to initiate disclosure emerges only in noting that, for a case of this type, disclosure was unusual also for the United States.[392] An exception to U.S. disclosure policy was apparently made in this instance because of considerations growing out of the immediately preceding air incidents in Germany.

Soviet Handling of Incident

As already noted, the Soviets did not make any mention of the incident until disclosure was made by the United States. Thereupon, the Soviet government issued a note on March 21 protesting the action of the RB-50. The Soviets did not publicize their own note, however, until March 23. The note was then broadcast thirty-five times on various Moscow radio beams but without comment, a pattern of publicity not at variance

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392 For elaboration and documentation of this point see RAND Research Memorandum RM-1346 (TOP SECRET).

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with that observed in cases of previous notes of this character.[393]

The Soviet note presented an account of the incident which, as usual, contradicted the U.S. version at all important points. The RB-50 (referred to in the Soviet note as a "B-29") was alleged to have made two consecutive violations of the Kamchatka peninsula. As far as can be made out from information contained in the Soviet note, the first violation was a minor one indeed. The "B-29" was alleged to have flown 15 to 17 kilometers (9.3 to 10.5 miles) "from the edge of the shore" (i.e., over the water) for a total distance of up to 70 kilometers. Since the territorial-waters limit claimed by the Soviets is twelve miles, a flight which penetrated that limit by only two or three miles is a minor violation even from the Soviet point of view.

The extent and duration of the second alleged violation was not indicated. The Soviet note merely stated that the "B-29" this time "violated the State frontier of the U.S.S.R. northeast of the town of Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka in the area of the village of Zhupanovo." (The latter town is also on the coast.) Thus, the Soviet account leaves vague the question of whether the second alleged violation involved a deeper penetration than the first.

Soviet aircraft were evidently sent up to investigate the first alleged violation and, according to the Soviet note,

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393 FBIS, Trends and Highlights of Moscow Broadcasts, April 1, 1953; CONFIDENTIAL.

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"approached the American bomber aircraft" when it was making its second violation. The American plane thereupon "opened fire," and one of the Soviet fighters "for the purpose of self-defense... had to open fire, after which the infringing aircraft turned around, left the Soviet coast and disappeared in an eastern direction."

It is interesting that the account of the encounter given by the Soviets in this instance deviates from the diplomatic stereotype employed in cases when U.S. planes were shot down. Only a minor violation was alleged in this case, whereas U.S. planes which have been shot down have always been charged with gross violations. Similarly, in this case the Soviet note omitted the usual claim that the Soviet planes first asked the intruding plane to land. These deviations from the stereotype may be due simply to the fact that the U.S. plane was not shot down, but they may also have more far-reaching significance as an indicator of a milder Soviet air policy.[394]

The reference to "visual reconnaissance" carried out by the U.S. plane was, from a propaganda standpoint, quite restrained. The Soviets did not take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Kamchatka incident to discredit the United States or to bolster their own position in the dispute then underway over air incidents in Germany.

The Soviet note may be regarded in fact as a purely routine protest which, we have hypothesized, would probably not have

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394 Cf. case study No. 103.

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been issued at all had not the United States made initial public disclosure of the incident.

105. ALLEGED AIR DROP OF U.S. ESPIONAGE AGENTS INTO THE UKRAINE (April 25-26, 1953)

On May 27, 1953, TASS announced the apprehension and execution of four U.S. espionage agents who were said to have been parachuted into the Ukraine on the night of April 25-26. According to the TASS report, the Soviet Ministry of Home Affairs had received data that same night about the overflight of the Ukraine by a foreign aircraft of unknown country of origin. Two of the agents, said to have been arrested on April 27, were reported to have told Soviet authorities that they had been parachuted from an American four-engined aircraft without identification marks.

The TASS report in many ways paralleled the December 19, 1951, announcement concerning American spies arrested in the Moldavian Republic. The account of the present case, however, differed from that of the earlier one in including the charge that an American aircraft violated Soviet frontiers, in the specificity with which American espionage schools and teachers were named, and in the specificity with which the items of their espionage equipment were enumerated.[395]

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395 FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Broadcasts, May 28, 1953, p. 10; CONFIDENTIAL.

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The TASS announcement was widely broadcast by Radio Moscow, and was carried by most central newspapers.[396] A month later, the story was revived and exploited propagandistically for purposes of a domestic "vigilance" campaign.[397]

106. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF HUNGARIAN AIR SPACE BY FOREIGN PLANE DROPPING HOSTILE PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS (June 30, 1953)

On June 30, 1953, a Hungarian broadcast (in English to North America) alleged that the air space of Hungary had been violated recently "when a foreign plane crossed our borders and dropped printed leaflets over some villages in Vas county." The leaflets were said to have "slandered Hungary, censured the People's Democratic system, and called for sabotage."

As far as is known, the alleged air violation and propaganda-leaflet operation were not publicized in Hungarian domestic news media, nor were they protested diplomatically by the Hungarian government to any foreign government.

The alleged propaganda operation was indirectly attributed to the U.S. government in the Hungarian broadcast by a reference "in this connection" to a Viennese report on alleged "subversive

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396 FBIS, Survey of U.S.S.R. Broadcasts, May 28, 1953, p. 10; CONFIDENTIAL.

397 Ibid., June 25, 1953, p. 13. See also ibid., June 11, 1953, p. 10; July 23, 1953, p. 11; and FBIS, Radio Propaganda Report, "New Soviet Treatment of Emigres and Western Agents," CD.8, June 25, 1954; CONFIDENTIAL.

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activities" carried out by Americans against the Peoples' Democracies. The Hungarian broadcast made specific mention of a leaflet in Hungarian, "calling for sabotage and terrorism," which was said to have been dropped from a plane accidentally over Austria.

No mention was made in the Hungarian broadcast of any effort at military counteraction against the unidentified plane. Nor was there any threat of future Hungarian military action in the event of similar violations of Hungarian air space.[398]

107. DANISH PLANE IN FORCED LANDING IN EAST GERMANY (July 6, 1953)

The New York Times of July 8, 1953, reported that two Danish businessmen and their light plane were released by Soviet authorities at the zonal border forty-eight hours after they had lost their way and landed in East Germany.

108. SOVIET PROTEST OF ALLEGED U.S. LEAFLET DROPS OVER SOVIET AIRFIELDS NEAR BERLIN (July 18, 1953)

On July 18, 1953, following repeated charges that the United States was responsible for the June 17 riots in East

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398 FBIS, Daily Report, July 1, 1953; The Washington Post, July 1, 1953.

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Germany, Soviet High Commissioner Vladimir S. Semyenov sent a written note to U.S. High Commissioner James B. Conant protesting against air-leaflet drops over Soviet airfields near Berlin. The Soviet note was publicly disclosed the evening of the same day by ADN, the official East German news agency.[399] However, Soviet media do not appear to have rebroadcast the note or publicized the matter.

The Soviet note charged that, almost daily in the previous two weeks, U.S. aircraft of the C-47 type had grossly violated flying regulations by circling, at a very low altitude (50 to 100 meters), around the Soviet airfields of Werneuchen and Elstal. These flights were held to constitute a serious threat to the air safety both of Soviet aircraft and of transport planes of the United States, Great Britain, and France flying between Berlin and West Germany.

Then, in a separate paragraph, the Soviet note drew attention to the fact that the U.S. planes in question had dropped leaflets containing hostile attacks against the Soviet forces over the Soviet airfields. "It is a matter of course," observed the note, "that the Soviet military authorities cannot tolerate this." No more explicit threat of military countermeasures was made in the Soviet note.

There was no indication in the Soviet note, nor in any other available sources, that the Soviets had taken any military

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399 FBIS, Daily Report, July 20, 1953.

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countermeasures against the alleged leaflet operation. According to the New York Times of July 19, 1953, both the Soviet airfields in question are within the authorized operating area for Allied planes -- i.e., within a twenty-mile radius of the Allied headquarters building in downtown Berlin. This would certainly account for the omission from the Soviet note of a charge that an air violation of East German territory had taken place. Rather, as noted above, the alleged leaflet operation was protested on the grounds that it constituted an air-safety hazard. But it is not possible to say whether, for the same reason, the Soviets did not take hostile military action against the leaflet planes.

Soviet public disclosure of their protest may have been motivated in part by a desire to bring the matter to the attention of British and French authorities, as well as to the public. By representing alleged U.S. air-leaflet operations as entailing a hazard to the safety of British and French -- as well as Soviet and U.S. -- aircraft, and by depicting the United States as engaged in covert propaganda activities likely to entail an intensification of the "cold war," the Soviets may have believed that the issue would help isolate the United States from its allies.

At the time of writing, no public announcement has been made of an official U.S. reply to the Soviet note. The immediate reaction of a U.S. official in Berlin (Cecil B. Lyon), as

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reported in the press, was to reject the Soviet charge as untrue.[400]

109. CZECH DIPLOMATIC PROTEST AGAINST U.S. PROPAGANDA BALLOONS (July 20, 1953)

A Czech note of July 20, 1953, to the U.S. government protested that balloons carrying propaganda leaflets had recently been sent over Czechoslovakia from West Germany.[401] The leaflets were said to be "of an inflamatory character... aimed at creating unrest among the population...and of inciting it to activities against the /Czech/ State." The Czech note did not refer explicitly to the "Crusade for Freedom," but mentioned "U.S. citizens specially sent to Germany for this purpose."

It is noteworthy that the Czech protest against the propaganda balloons was not based on the grounds that this activity constituted a violation of Czech air space. Rather, the Czech note held that for the U.S. authorities to permit such activities in their zone of Germany was a "gross abuse of the United States' position as an occupying power, incompatible with the Four-Power agreements on Germany." The propaganda activity in question was also denounced in the Czech note as

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400 The Washington Post, July 19, 1953.
401 FBIS, Daily Report, July 20 and 21, 1953.

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designed to hamper the relaxation of international tension "at a time when the nations of the world are intensifying their efforts to strengthen peace and to secure international cooperation."

The Czech note concluded with a request that the Czech government be informed by the U.S. government of "steps taken to prevent similar provocations, aimed against peaceful relations among nations and constituting gross interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia...."

The Czech note was disclosed to the Czech public on the following day, July 21, 1953. But the subject of propaganda balloons had been discussed in Czech domestic propaganda several days earlier.[402] The contention that the leaflets in question were ineffective, and had even backfired, was given a minor position in the Czech note itself, but was much emphasized in the Czech domestic commentary. The substance of the domestic press and radio attack on the propaganda balloons was repeated by Radio Moscow in a home service broadcast, July 20, 1953.

On July 31, the U.S. government replied to the Czech protest in a formal note which was immediately made public. Though observing that the balloons in question had been released by the Crusade for Freedom, "an organization established by private American citizens," the U.S. note did not avoid an expression of its attitude toward the action in question.

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[402] Czech home service, July 18, 1953, 18:50 GMT.

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> It is a fundamental conviction of the American Government and people that free communication between peoples constitutes a principle upon which the very life of the international community should be founded. If any government attempts to erect a wall sealing off its people from contact with the outside world, it is inevitable that ways will be found both by the people inside that country and by the peoples of other countries outside to penetrate that artificial barrier....The United States believes that the best assurance that this means of communication /balloons/ will not be used is to obviate the need for it by permitting what is natural and necessary in the modern world, namely, free contact between nations and the free exchange of information and ideas.

The U.S. note also rejected the Czech allegation that such activities from the U.S. Zone of Germany involved any misuse of the position of the United States as an occupying power. So far as is known, the U.S. note was not published in Czechoslovakia, nor has there been, at the time of writing, a Czech reply to it.

An Associated Press dispatch from Munich reported that the Crusade for Freedom balloon operation had taken place on the night of July 13, 1953.[403]

In his syndicated column of September 8, 1953, Drew Pearson gave additional information (unverified from any other source) on the balloon operation:

> Last July the Crusade for Freedom launched 6600 balloons into Czechoslovakia from West Germany, carrying eight million pieces of Czech paper money and 1,500,000 leaflets telling the Czechs about the Berlin riots and the purge of Marshal Beria....The leaflets gave pictures of the Berlin riots, so the Czechs knew they told the truth.

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403 The Washington Post, July 22, 1953.

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When the Communists got wise to the first balloon barrage, they used seven MiG's for an entire day trying to shoot down the balloons. Result: the MiG's bagged three balloons in two hours, while the balloons were being launched at the rate of 200 an hour. Next the Reds brought out five ME-109's to try to stop the balloon barrage. No success.[404]

110. SOVIET IL-12 SHOT DOWN BY U.S. FIGHTERS OVER NORTH KOREA[405] (July 27, 1953)

On July 27, 1953, U.S. jet fighters shot down a Russian-built Il-12 transport plane over North Korea. The incident, which took place about eight miles south of the Yalu boundary, was one of the last air actions before the Korean truce went into effect ten hours later.

The action was disclosed immediately by the U.S. military command, but not in such fashion as to indicate an international

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404 This information was given by Mr. Pearson in a column expressing criticism of Secretary of State Dulles and other State Department authorities for having allegedly disapproved plans to balloon-drop food parcels to East Germans and bibles behind the Iron Curtain. Several days later, however, it was reported in the press that the project for balloon-dropping 10,000 bibles into Russia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, previously held up over a question of State Department approval, would now be put into operation. The International Council of Christian Churches, which sponsored the project, stated that it had information that such State Department approval was not needed. (The Washington Post, September 10, 1953.)

405 This account is based on unclassified sources. For verbatim texts of notes exchanged and official comment see the Department of State Bulletin, August 10, 1953; August 24, 1953; March 15, 1954.

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incident between U.S. and Soviet forces. That the Il-12 was a Soviet passenger plane was disclosed by the Soviet government only on July 31, in a note charging U.S. fighters with having intruded 112 kilometers into Chinese territory in order to make the attack. According to the Soviet note, the Il-12 was flying on a regular route from Port Arthur to the U.S.S.R. Fifteen passengers and six crew members were said to have died as a result of the incident.

The Soviet note and version of the incident were immediately rejected by the U.S. government. In a note of August 1, delivered in Moscow, the U.S. government fixed responsibility for the incident upon the Soviet government on the grounds that the action took place over North Korea before the termination of hostilities.

On the next day, August 2, the Soviet press carried a TASS rejoinder which denounced the U.S. version of the incident. A map was published which purported to show the real route taken by the Soviet plane. It was charged that the U.S. airmen had acted deliberately to intercept the Soviet plane on a route well known to them.

Somewhat belatedly, considering that its territory was alleged to have been violated, the Chinese communist government announced over the Peiping radio, on August 2, that an official protest against the U.S. air violation was being made.

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In a note dated August 11, 1953, the Soviet government reiterated its version of the incident in somewhat greater detail, and referred to an investigation conducted by the Chief Administration for the Civil Airfleet of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet note demanded compensation and damages totalling $1,861,450.

On January 26, 1954, the United States replied, expressing its willingness to recognize and meet any obligation arising out of the Il-12 incident if the Soviets could adduce documentary evidence on a number of matters which were itemized in detail in the U.S. note.

Possible Soviet motives in making disclosure of the incident only after the RB-50 incident of July 29 are considered in the case study on the latter incident.[406]

111. U.S. RB-50 SHOT DOWN BY SOVIET FIGHTERS OFF CAPE POVOROTNY (NEAR VLADIVOSTOK)[407] (July 29, 1953)

On July 29, 1953, a U.S. RB-50 was shot down by Soviet MiG's over the Sea of Japan.[408] The B-50 was on temporary duty

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406 See case study No. 111.

407 Only unclassified sources on the incident have been consulted; classification of the case study is required by the interpretation of Soviet air-defense policy, and by reference to other incidents.

408 Whereas in earlier accounts of the incident, and as late as in the U.S. note of January 26, 1954, the U.S. plane was referred to as an RB-50, in the most recent U.S. note (October 9, 1954), which preferred a diplomatic claim against the U.S.S.R., the plane was identified only as a B-50.

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with FEAF from the 343d Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron based at Forbes Air Base, Topeka, Kansas.[409] The State Department notes to the U.S.S.R. dated July 21, 1953, and October 9, 1954, respectively, referred to the mission of the B-50 as a "routine navigational training mission" and as a "routine navigational mission."

As usual in such incidents, the Soviet version of the facts of this case contradicted the U.S. version on the following crucial points: whether a violation of Soviet territory was made; whether some sort of warning was given by the Soviet intercepting aircraft; and which plane opened fire. In addition, the Soviet government denied having any knowledge of survivors from the destroyed B-50, whereas the U.S. government (especially in its note of October 9, 1954) cited indications available to it that the Soviets were withholding information on this score.

The incident is of unusual interest for several reasons. First, since a survivor of the B-50 was rescued, the U.S. government was in a position to make a stronger case against the U.S.S.R. than it would have been able to do otherwise. Secondly, the Soviet government described its action against the B-50 in terms which suggested a new, less hostile Soviet air-defense

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409 This was disclosed by the Forbes Air Force Base information office. (The New York Times, August 1, 1953; see also The /Washington/ Evening Star, July 31, 1953.)

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policy. Thirdly, in its most recent note on the incident (October 9, 1954) the U.S. government explicitly rejected the Soviet claim to a twelve-mile territorial-waters limit, though at the same time maintaining that the B-50 did not approach that close to the U.S.S.R. Fourthly, the Soviet government made the unprecedented admission that one of the attacking MiG's had been damaged by the U.S. plane.[410]

The exchange of diplomatic notes following the incident was as follows:[411]

1st Soviet note - July 30, 1953
1st U.S. note - July 31, 1953
2nd Soviet note - August 4, 1953
2nd U.S. note - August 4, 1953
3rd Soviet note - August 26, 1953
3rd U.S. note - January 26, 1954
4th U.S. note - May 25, 1954
5th U.S. note - October 9, 1954

The most detailed U.S. version of the incident appears in the note of October 9, 1954; the most detailed Soviet version apparently was given in the note of August 26, 1954. The Soviet government did not reply to the 3rd and 4th U.S. notes, nor, thus far, to the most recent U.S. note which preferred a diplomatic claim of $2,785,492.94, and invited the U.S.S.R., if it denied liability, to join in submitting the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

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410 Soviet note of July 30, 1953.

411 For verbatim texts of some of these notes see State Department Bulletin, August 10, 1953; August 24, 1953; March 15, 1954; and State Department Press Release No. 566, October 9, 1954. Apparently some of the notes (3rd Soviet note and 4th U.S. note) have not been published. In addition, accounts of the incident were given to the press by the sole survivor rescued by U.S. forces, co-pilot Captain Roche. (The New York Times, August 1, 1953; The Washington Post, August 3, 1953.)

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Significance

The shooting down of the U.S. B-50 raised once again the question of Soviet air-defense policy toward alleged air intruders. There had been certain indicators in Soviet diplomatic handling of the mid-March, 1953, incidents of a possible modification in the severe policy of the late Stalin era.

At first glance, therefore, the fact that a U.S. plane was shot down several months later, on July 29, seemed to provide a conclusive answer to any speculation regarding a modification in Soviet policy. But the occurrence of the incident did not rule out the possibility that there had been a temporary amelioration in Soviet air policy from mid-March to late July.

Nor did the occurrence of the incident rule out an alternative hypothesis, namely, that the shooting down of the B-50 took place not in implementation of standing air-defense instructions (as in the late Stalin period) but, rather, in implementation of special Soviet orders authorizing only this one incident.

In the latter event, the B-50 incident would have more limited significance. It would not indicate a resumption of the earlier hostile policy, though it might indicate a readiness to stage such incidents occasionally for special purposes.[412]

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[412] For example, the possibility suggests itself that the Soviet action against the B-50 was taken in retaliation for the U.S. shooting down of a Russian Il-12 on July 27. A

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While the shooting down of the B-50 tended to show toughness on the part of the new Soviet regime, the diplomatic handling of the incident by the Soviets gave a somewhat contrary impression. In protesting the alleged violation by the B-50, the Soviet note of July 30 did not reiterate the old stereotyped version of the facts associated with the severe air policy of the late Stalin era.[413]

Rather, the version of the facts of the July 29 incident was quite new and implied a much milder Soviet policy toward air intruders. The relevant passage in the Soviet note reads as follows:

> When two Soviet fighters drew near with the aim of showing the American aircraft that it was within the bounds of the U.S.S.R. and to propose that it leave the air space of the Soviet Union, the American plane opened fire....[414]

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412 (Cont'd)

connection between the two incidents was suggested by the fact that the Soviets did not disclose the July 27 incident until after they protested the July 29 (B-50) incident. And it may be significant that Gromyko handed the Soviet protest of the July 27 incident to Bohlen when, on July 31, the latter delivered the U.S. protest on the B-50 incident. (See State Department Bulletin, August 10, 1953, and March 15, 1954.) The connection between the two incidents, of course, may have been otherwise than suggested above; the Il-12 incident may have been protested by the Soviets in order to justify or divert attention from their aggressive action against the B-50. Moreover, it is not possible to say whether retaliation could have been decided upon -- presumably at the highest policy level in Moscow -- and implemented within two days of the shooting down of the Il-12.

413 See also case study No. 103.

414 FBIS, Daily Report, July 31, 1953; RESTRICTED.

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This version clearly implies that Soviet air-defense policy at the time was, at least in the first instance, to warn an intruding plane that it was over Soviet territory in order that it might rectify its error. This is at complete variance with the earlier, more severe Soviet policy, as conveyed both in the older stereotype and in earlier disclosures during Stalin's day of the (ostensible) standing instructions to Soviet air-defense personnel. The Soviet note of July 30 entirely omitted any explicit or implicit reference to the key provision of the late-Stalin-era air policy -- namely, the rigid requirement that an intruding plane must land at a Soviet airfield or, "in case of resistance," be fired upon.

It is curious, then, that in undertaking once again hostile action against a U.S. plane venturing close to Soviet territorial waters, the new Soviet regime should use diplomatic phraseology which conveyed a new and much milder policy toward air intruders. It is possible, of course, that the changed language did not in fact indicate a softer policy on the part of the new regime. On the other hand, the new Soviet diplomatic terminology so clearly implied a milder air policy that it could not be easily dismissed as merely a matter of verbal strategy. For the terminology employed left the Soviet government open to a diplomatic request that it explicitly confirm the milder policy implied therein of warning and turning off air intruders. It does not seem likely that the Soviets would lay themselves open

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to such a query unless they were indeed prepared to acknowledge that their policy was, as implied in the July 30 note, to warn an intruding plane in order to turn it off.

Thus far, the U.S. government has not explicitly asked the Soviet government to confirm or deny that its air-defense policy is, as implied in its account of the B-50 incident, to warn off intruding planes. However, such clarification may have been part of the intention behind the following inquiry put to the Soviets in the U.S. note of January 26, 1954:

> 6. With respect to the alleged warning of Soviet aircraft to the RB-50, the Soviet note is not clear as to whether the Soviet Government claims any attempt was made to warn the RB-50 to leave Soviet territory prior to its destruction by Soviet fighters. In this regard the Soviet Government is requested to describe, with specificity and detail, the precise actions which were taken by the Soviet personnel involved (whether in the air or on the ground) to communicate, prior to the firing at it, any warning at all to the RB-50, or any suggestion to it that it was flying over Soviet territory and that it should leave the air space....

Another possible explanation for the introduction of a new Soviet diplomatic formula may be suggested, one which cannot be evaluated on the basis of available information. Soviet leaders may have become concerned lest the United States and other Western powers adopt in the future a tough air-defense policy against communist planes, i.e., that they might resort to force, if necessary, to compel foreign planes suspected of overflight to land.

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Their own action, in other words, may have been a way of avoiding establishment of a precedent.

It may be noted that the new Soviet diplomatic stereotype was repeated in the case of the U.S. Navy plane shot down off Vladivostok on September 4, 1954, and in the case of the U.S. B-29 shot down off Hokkaido on November 7, 1954.

112. YUGOSLAV FIGHTER PILOT DEFECTS IN PLANE TO ITALY (September 12, 1953)

An Associated Press dispatch of November 15 from Udine, Italy, reported that Italy had returned a fighter plane in which a Yugoslav pilot had escaped on the previous September 12, 1953. Lt. Nicol Jake Jaksek had landed his plane at the Italian air base at Aviano, and had asked and received political asylum. Stripped of its armament, the P-47 Thunderbolt, originally supplied by the United States, was flown back by a Yugoslav captain on November 15.[415]

113. PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE PLANE OF UNIDENTIFIED NATIONALITY IN LANDING IN ITALY (October 24, 1953)

An Associated Press dispatch of October 26, 1953, from Bari, Italy, cited a report that an airplane "of origin still

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[415] The New York Times, November 16, 1953.

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cloaked in mystery" had landed shortly before dawn on Saturday (October 24) at the Brindisi military airbase, with four persons aboard.

"In the plane, according to unofficial reports, army investigators found a powerful aerial camera--but no documents to identify the four crewmen or passengers. Inquiries at the airbase were answered tersely with: 'Investigation is under way by authorities. For security reasons no information can be given.'"[416]

114. BRITISH PLANE FIRED UPON BY UNIDENTIFIED PLANE OVER YUGOSLAVIA (December 31, 1953)

On January 7, 1954, the Yugoslav Air Force Command issued an official communiqué in connection with a report from British sources that on December 31, 1953, in the sector of the Yugoslav town of Maribor, a jet plane several times opened fire at a British plane belonging to the Eagle Aviation Transport Company. The Yugoslav communiqué stated that at 17:20 hours on that day a jet plane of unknown make was noticed flying at an altitude of 5,000 meters. It flew into Yugoslav air space on a course of 160 degrees, circled once over the sector of Maribor, and flew away on a course of 360 degrees. However, it has not been established whether this aircraft opened fire.

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[416] The (Washington) Evening Star, October 26 (or 27), 1953.

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The communiqué stated in conclusion that, with the exception of two JU-58 transport planes, no aircraft of the Yugoslav Air Force flew on December 31, 1953.[417]

According to an Associated Press dispatch from Belgrade, cited in the Washington Post, January 7, 1954, the British plane, attacked near Yugoslavia's northern border with Hungary, escaped undamaged, and the unidentified plane sped away. In London, the Air Ministry said it had received no reports of such an attack on a British plane.

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[417] FBIS, Daily Report, January 7, 1954.

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